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SHETLAND FIRESIDE TALES

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SHETLAND

FIRESIDE TALES

OR,

THE HERMIT OF TROSSWICKNESS

By GEORGE STEWART

"Where the 'merry dancers' bright
Flit along the northern sky,
Basking in their fairy light,
Thules' bays and islands lie,
Boldly tower her crags on high;
And the sounding ocean waves,
Mingling with the seabirds' cry,
Echo through her lonely caves."

L. J. NICOLSON.

SECOND EDITION.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The Author of the following pages spent the earlier and happier years of his life amongst the peasant youth of his native islands, sharing with them the perils and pleasures of their daring and manly sports by sea and shore—the gun, the oar, and the cragsman's rope being the familiar and appropriate playthings of those earlier years. Happy years, when the long summer days, separated only by a brief twilight, were ever too short to accomplish all that youthful enterprise could plan; and the long winter nights never long enough to tell all the fairy tales, legends, and ghost stories which inspired with pleasure or fear the hearts of youthful listeners.

The impression which those wild legends and fascinating fairy tales of a bygone age made upon the Author's youthful imagination, has not been lessened by time, but rather deepened as maturer years presented the subject to his mind, not merely as a childish pastime, but as a mirror in which are reflected, more or less distinctly, the habits, thoughts, and feelings of past generations.

It was with such feelings, and in such a view of the subject, that the Author was led some years ago to write from memory, and in the native dialect, a collection of Shetland

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tales, not with a view to publication, but merely as a private souvenir of past times and old friendships, which the recital of those tales so vividly recalled. The idea of publication occurred to him as a later thought, and it was when revising the tales for this purpose that he was led to attempt the more ambitious and difficult task of writing a general story, illustrative of Shetland life and manners. In carrying out this design, he has felt justified in still retaining the original title of "SHETLAND FIRESIDE TALES," because those original tales form to a large extent the natural woof in the web of his story, and because the chief characters who figure in the course of its simple narrative are faithful portraits of faces and forms which once surrounded the Shetland cottage fireside, and were the loved and familiar friends of the Author's early youth.

He can scarcely hope that amid the multitudinous works of fiction which annually issue from the press, and bearing as they do the recommendation and authority of great names, his humble literary effort can occupy a very high place. But be this as it may, he has some satisfaction in believing that his own countrymen will at least appreciate his efforts in trying to preserve, in a written form, some of those familiar tales which once so happily wiled away the long winter nights, and in their present form may still, he hopes, help in some measure to serve the same important purpose.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

When about 14 years ago the Author of "Shetland Fireside Tales" had such misgivings regarding his first literary effort that even the initials attached to the work were a little misleading, he little thought that ever a second edition would be asked for. Not only, however, was the first edition readily taken up, but for many years past a desire for a second has been expressed, both in this country and America. This affords another example of how an Author, who writes for fame, sometimes does not obtain it, while another with no such expectations, but being simply and humbly desirous to express what he knows and feels, finds in the community of human thought and feeling a response to his own. It adds not a little to the Author's satisfaction that in issuing a second edition native publishers can share in any credit due to this as a native effort.

LEITH, May, 1892.

SHETLAND FIRESIDE TALES.

CHAPTER I.

Then pilgrim turn, thy cares forego,
All earthly cares are wrong;
Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long.
GOLDSMITH.

ON the eastern extremity of Trosswickness,[1] near an ancient Pictish ruin, once stood a lonely hut far remote from any other human habitation. Its solitary occupant was a man named Olla Ollison, whose strange mode of life and peculiar habits had long rendered him an object of suspicion in the eyes of his ignorant and superstitious countrymen. For reasons which will afterwards appear, Olla Ollison had become a hermit, and it was his custom to retire to the sea-shore after sunset, and there, seated by himself under the dark shadow of some frowning rock, he would give vent to his grief, and find in the solitude of the scene, and the memory of events which it recalled, some relief from the sorrows which oppressed his heart.

In an age when belief in the supernatural was almost universal, and when in the awe-struck imagination of a rude seafaring population the earth, air, and sea teemed with grim creations of Scandinavian mythology, it need not be wondered at if even that education and intelligence which he so fully possessed should not altogether prevent Olla Ollison from being influenced by

[1] See Note A. Trosswickness.

prevailing beliefs, and that, in his ignorance of the true cause of the calamity which had befallen him, he should seek in the supernatural for the revelation of a mystery he could not otherwise penetrate.

Olla Ollison was at this time a man about thirty years of age, of somewhat slender make, and about 5 feet 6 inches in height. His erect gait and polished manners showed that the earlier period of his life had been spent under the softening influence of education and refinement. His beard, which grief had prematurely tinged with grey, descended in luxuriant growth to his waist, while his hair hung in careless profusion around his shoulders. When engaged in conversation, his countenance was pleasant, animated, and expressive; but, when alone, it constantly wore an air of pensive thought and settled melancholy.

His dress consisted of jacket and knee-breeches of blue cloth of native manufacture. On his head he wore a worsted knitted cap, and on his feet the common native wooden-soled slippers. A few patches of cultivated soil around his hut produced a scanty supply of potatoes and black oats; and a cow, with a few sheep, which cropped the wild herbage of the headland, more than supplied all his other wants.[1] During the spring and autumn, his time was chiefly spent about his little croft. In summer, he employed much of his time in fishing the small red cod and pilticks[2] which abound around the shores of the Shetland Isles; but during winter, owing to the tempests which frequently sweep over those headlands, he seldom left his hut.

The autumn had now far advanced, and the hermit had just finished his harvest, and put his sheaves in little stooks behind his hut. His day's work being done, he returned to his solitary home to partake of the humble meal which his own

[1] See Note B. Shetland Manners and Customs.
[2] Coal fish *(Merlangus Carbonarius)* one to three years old.

hands had prepared, and to rest until the moon had risen, when he intended to return to the sea-shore, as was his nightly custom at this particular season of the year.

The night was calm and beautiful, and no sound fell upon the ear, save that of the murmuring waves, which gently rose and fell around the dark rocky shore of Trosswickness. In a cloudless sky, a full-orbed moon rode in silent glory, casting a flickering belt of silvery light across the dark waters which extended far to the distant horizon. The seafowl had gone to rest on the lofty ledges of the Ness, and the wild cries of the seamew and kittywake were hushed in the silence of night.

After quitting his cottage, the hermit directed his steps to the northern extremity of the headland, where the rock in many places shelves in a steep descent of several hundred feet to the sea. He was about midway down this steep pathway, when he observed an old man ascending the rock, and coming towards him with a heavy "büddie" or creel of sillocks[1] on his back. This old man was Yacob of Trosswick, who had remained unusually late at the fishing that night, and was now on his way home. On looking up, the old man saw the hermit coming towards him, and in his anxiety to move to one side so as to allow him to pass, he failed to notice a deep fissure in the rock before him, and into which he at that moment stumbled; but just as he was falling, the hermit quickly caught him by the back of the neck, and dragging him up, disentangled his neck from the band of the creel which threatened to strangle him.

'My friend," cried the hermit, "why would you so endanger your own life in trying to avoid a fellow creature who never did, and never can do you any harm?"

"Ay, ay; Lord kens," exclaimed Yacob; "ye never did me ony ill, an' noo ye're düne me muckle guid, an' sae may

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[1] Coal fish, one year old.

my blissen an' da Lord's blissen be on you fir it, though I'm gotten a sair shack,[1] an' lost a hantle o' my sillicks inta da bargain; bit as the auld sayin' is, 'it's never ill bit it micht a been warr.' I micht a been misackered[2] for a' my days; bit whaur may ye be gaen at dis oor o' da nicht, if it may be a fair question?"[3]

"The question is fair enough, my friend," replied the hermit. "I come here for the purpose of meditation, to hold communion with the rocks and the rippling waves, and to listen to their voice, as they soothe the anguish of my soul. I come here to ask the great sea to give me back the treasure of my heart, which it has kept from me these many long years."

"Ah, weel," responded Yacob, "I'm been up an' doon ower dis heilik,[4] an' roond aboot dis banks, fir da last tretty year o' my life, bit never yet saw or heard onything warr nor mysell, nor ony idder soond bit da roar o' da brack,[5] or da rumble o' da winter sea; bit ye're a man o' eddication, ye see, an' I can dü little mair nor read a shapter i' da Bible, an' dats bit ill-santafied sometimes, sae muckle as da warr. In my young days, ye see, we learned wir *Abersay* fae da Cattages, an' tocht we wir far enouch whin we cud spell com-mand-de-ment; bit dis is awa fae da point. Ir ye no oorie[6] sitten yoursell doon here like a sleepin baukie[7] on a rudderie[8] skerrie? In coorse ye hae nae wife at hame ta haud you oot o' langer wi';[9] though, faith, atween you an' me, an' I hoop it'll geng na farder, ye're mebbe as weel withoot her; adumes[10] o' mysell, I hae a wife, and der's mebbe warr atween dis an' Sumburgh Head, if shü wid only haud her tongue aff me, bit fae da dim[11] rives till

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1 Shake.
2 Seriously injured.
3 See Note C. Peculiarities of the Shetland dialect.
4 Slanting rock dipping towards the sea.
5 Breaking waves; foam.
6 Feeling dread or lonesomeness.
7 Guilemot (*Uria*).
8 Rock submerged at high-water, and covered with *Balanoides*.
9 Prevented from wearying.
10 For example.
11 Daybreak.

black dayset shü's yaag, yaag, yaagin,[1] Yacob dis, and Yacob dat; as I says till her sometimes, deil clumpse[2] dee an' haud dy tongue sometime—Lord forgie me for swearin'. In coorse ye're a man o' eddication, an' micht a hed a wife dat wid a kent whin ta hadden her tongue, an' ane dat wid a been blide[3] ta made you happy, dats ta say if da clash[4] da folk has aboot you is no true; and dis is my ain opinion noo whin I luik closer at you; ye're no like a bodie ava dat hes düins wi' evil speerits—tangies, brownies, witches, warlocks, or hillfolk."[5]

To this harangue the hermit listened attentively; but when old Yacob mentioned the words, "an' ane dat wid a made you happy," he heaved a deep sigh, and a tear was seen to tremble down his cheek.

"My honest friend!" exclaimed the hermit, wiping away the tear, "I sympathise with you in your troubles, and I thank you for your sympathy in mine, and for your good opinion of me; but I desire to be now at my meditations, and if you will come to-morrow to my humble dwelling, I shall be happy to have further conversation with you."

"Yea dat sall I," said old Yacob; "if da Lord spares me ta see da morn, I sall truly come up an' see you; an' sae guid nicht be wi' you, an' sit nae langer ipa da cauld stanes nor ye can help."

Saying this, the old man trudged up the heilik with what remained of his sillicks, and the hermit retired under the dark shadow of the overhanging rock which stood close by.

Next day old Yacob kept his promise to visit the hermit; and on approaching the cottage, tapped gently at the door, when a voice from within cried, "Come in, friend."

"Guid day be here," was Yacob's salutation as he entered; "I'm blide ta see ye' naithen the warr o' your sittin'

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1 Incessant angry talk.
2 Choke.
3 Glad.
4 Gossip; scandal.
5 Fairies.

stirnin[1] ipa da cauld ebb stanes last nicht; it's cauld enouch whin ye're takin da sillicks aff da huik as fast as ye can cleek dem up, bit ta sit stourin[2] i' da laybrack wi' naithen ta dü ava, it palls[3] me ta tink hoo ye can hae da patience ta dü it; bit as I said afore, ye're a man o' eddication, an' it may be presumption in a puir bodie like me ta express my opinions sae freely, bit I hoop ye'll excüse me; an' I'm süre if der's ony wy I can obleege you, I'll be ower blide ta dü it, and niver ax for idder pay or tanks."

"Take a seat, my friend," said the hermit, pointing to a settle or "restin' chair" which stood at one side of the fireplace. "I am glad to see you, and thank you for those kind sentiments which you have now expressed, and which indeed sound strangely in my ears, so long unaccustomed as they have been to any other sound but the echo of my own voice and the voice of Nature, whose gentle whispers have inspired me with hope, and sustained me amid the solitude of many years of sorrow. I feel that I can trust you with what I am about to disclose. I have been long anxious to confide the secret of my sorrow to one who would sympathize with me, and who, when I am gone to join my love in the better land, will tell the story of my life, and show that I was not the wicked person I have been supposed to be; and that I have never consorted with evil spirits or demons in my retirement to the sea-shore."

"Deed no! deed no!" exclaimed old Yacob; "what guid cud dey dü bit frichten you oot o' your seven senses. Lord keep us fae a' dat's uneartly. I aye keep a sherp e'e aboot me in da mirkinnen[4] whin I'm passin' crubdykes,[5] muckle grey stanes, or hill-folks' knowes; an' whin I'm just passin' da warst places, I canna help rinnin, auld as I am, for I tink I just hear da sough o' dem close at my heels, an' if I gie a

1 Shivering.
2 Staring.
3 Puzzles or perplexes.
4 Dusk of the evening.
5 A small enclosure where cabbage plants are grown.

gluffed[1] luik ower my shouder, I see der ill-faured een glowerin' efter me in da dark, just as veesably as I see you affore my face dis minit.

"Ye'll hae nae doot heard aboot auld Peggy Moad da maidwife ;[2] ye ken shü wis taen awa ta ane o' da hill-folks' wives, an' efter da bairn wis born, shü got sontin[3] in a perrie[4] gless ta rub its een wi' ; whin shu wis düin dis, shü felt her ain e'e a kind a yuckie,[5] an' pitten up her haand ta claw it, just as you or I wid dü, a nirty[6] corn o' da smearin gets intil her e'e, whin, Lord be aboot 'is, what does shü see bit a lock[7] o' hill-folk ipa da middle o' da flüir, makin' a image o' a coo dat dey wir gaen ta tak awa fae a püir man dat nicht. An' what wir dey makin' da image o', tink ye? just oot o' a lock o' auld cashies,[8] flakies,[9] an meshies,[10] an' ony idder truss dey cud get. Whin shü sees dis, shü slips awa oot by dem, and as shü wis passin' shü slips her keys inta da hert o' dis concern withoot dem seein' her, sae der wis nae mair o' dis till da neist day whin shü gengs hame, whin da first news dat shü hears is dat Eddie Lourie o' Yaafield's best coo wis stark dead ; aff shü sends wird ta him no ta touch a hair o' her, bit ta yird[11] her within da eart ; an' if he'll no believe Peggy's wird, ta open da coo, an' he'll fin a steel airrow stickin' trow her hert, an' da bundle o' keys lian atween her hert an' her lichts ; sae dey opens da coo, an' fin's it just as Peggy hed sed. A while efter dis, ae Sunday whin shü wis gaen ta da kirk, wha sud shü meet bit da man o' da hill-wife dat shü wis aside. Says he, 'Hoo is a' wi' you da day, Peggy ;' an' wi' dat he blew his breath in her face, an' fae dat day ta dis shü never saw a stime[12] more. Bit

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1 Frightened.
2 See Note D. Fairies.
3 Something.
4 Little.
5 Itching.
6 Small.
7 Number or quantity.
8 Creel made of straw, which is bound together by ropes of bent, or rashes twisted by the fingers.
9 A large mat for winnowing corn on, and made of the same material as creels.
10 Pannier holders made of rashes or *bent*, and having bands of the same material for attaching to the clibber or pony saddle.
11 Bury.
12 Blink, or small portion of light.

I'm keepin' you standin' ower lang ipa your feet wi' my lang tale. As da auld wife says sometimes whin I fin' faut wi' her yatterin', I'm no atagedder free mysell o' sayin' sometimes mair den I sud say. Bit noo I'm düne, an' I'll be blide ta hear onything ye're pleased ta say ta me, an' I'll keep it like blue murder till da time ye tell me ta speak o' it."

CHAPTER II.

"I saw her, and the passionate heart of man entered the breast of the wild dreaming boy, and from that hour I grew what to the last I shall be—her adorer."
BULWER LYTTON.

"THE story of my life," said the hermit, seating himself on a chair close to the settle on which the old man sat, "is indeed a strange and romantic one, and I shall now begin it.

"My name is not Ollison—the name I am hereabout known by. My real name is Roderick Douglas. Ollison was my mother's maiden name—a name adopted by me in accordance with my grandfather's wish after we left Scotland.[1] My father fell on the blood-red field of Culloden, on that sad day when the star of the House of Stuart was for ever quenched in the blood of Scotland's bravest sons.

"My mother in her sorrow decided to leave Scotland, and return to Shetland, her native country, taking me, her only son, with her, then a lad of about twelve years of age. Arriving at her father's house, who lived in the island of Bressay, we met with a cordial welcome, and experienced every kindness and sympathy. I was shortly afterwards sent to the parish school, which was reckoned the best of the kind in the islands, and continued there for two years, making great progress in Latin and mathematics, which I was then chiefly studying.

"About this time my mother decided to go and live with a sister of hers, who was married to a factor on one of the estates in the parish of Dunrossness, and I accompanied her. Several weeks after our arrival at the village of Skelaburgh, where my aunt lived, it was decided that I should go to a

[1] See Note E. Shetland surnames.

neighbouring school to learn navigation, in case I might one day follow the example of the youth of the islands, and go to sea.

"After I had been a few weeks at this school, I was sitting one day on a form near the fire, deeply absorbed in studying a problem in plane trigonometry, when, happening to look over the top of my slate at the children who were seated on a form on the opposite side, my eyes fell upon a face and form which sent a thrill through my veins,and went out at the points of my toes and fingers. The shock made me look hard at the work on my slate, and to hold my breath as if I had done some offence, and expected the teacher's switch across my back. I tried to get hold of the lost thread of my problem, but found my sines and tangents all playing at hide-and-seek on my slate. After a little I ventured to take another peep, when a sharper thrill went through my frame, making my cheeks glow, and my heart beat quickly.

"The cause of all this was a girl, about two years younger than myself, who had come to the school that day for the first time, and whom I had never seen before. Oh! how shall I describe her? Her dark auburn hair fell in rich careless ringlets down her snow-white neck and shoulders; her round rosy cheeks blushing their softest tints, and pure as the bloom of the crimson-tipped daisy; her mouth like a little rosebud; and her eyes—heaven itself was reflected in their soft depths when she smiled (for she smiled once or twice while whispering to the girl who sat next her). My heart beat like an imprisoned bird against the bars of its cage. Oh! how I was entranced, spell-bound, as I watched, from behind my slate, the various expressions that passed over her countenance; like gleams of sunshine on a summer day, when the floating silvery clouds cast a faint shadow here and there. While thus gazing upon her, for I had almost forgotten where I was, her eyes met mine, when a kind of timid, wondering, inquiring expression

passed over her countenance, as if she had recognised a friend, and then found she was mistaken. I blushed the deepest crimson, and held down my head."

"Ay, ay," exclaimed old Yacob, "just like calf-love, as da sayin' is: it's winderful guid while it lests; but it's just ower guid ta lest lang. I hed a sma brash[1] o' calf-love mysell whin I was i' my day o' douch;[2] an' tho' I say it dat sudna say it, I wis as prunk[3] a young man as wis eneath da 'Wart Hill';[4] an' wir auld wife wis den just about as trig a bit lass is cam in da door o' da Ness Kirk. Bit, leck o' me! a' dat's by an' gane; an' da cauld winter o' auld age sets in efter the simmer o' youth, an' da hairst of middle life, an' leaves us naithin bit frosty pows, widdered shafts, an' cankersome, countermashious naturs. Bit dis wis no what I wis gaen to say. Ye hae a winderful poor o' unction,[5] Mr Ollison. In listenin' ta you describin' da bonnie bit lass ye met wi' at da schüle, I just tocht how weel ye cud gie wis a bit screed[6] some Sunday, fae da 'Sang o' Solomon,' if ye wid only just come da lent o' da kirk. I'm sure Mr Shürtiends wid no hinder you da üse o' da poopit. I tink da 'Sang o' Solomon' is muckle in da wy o' your gift o' unction. It's a' aboot da kirk, ye ken; though, owin' ta my want o' laer,[7] I never cud ken yet hoo dey fand dis oot,—mair by token, as Solomon adümes o' mysell, in his young days cared little for idder kirk or minister. Bit beggin' your pardon for pittin' you aff da treed o' your story. Ye wir sayin' da bit lass hed fairly pitten you in a swidder,[8] an nae doot ye wid get warr afore ye got better."

"Yes," continued the hermit, "this lovely child, for so I might call her, won my heart, young as I was. I left the school that day scarcely knowing what to do with myself. Arriving home, I could neither eat nor study. I felt a kind of

1 A slight attack of fever or illness.
2 In the prime of life.
3 Smart, manly.
4 A hill near Fitful Head.
5 Power of speech, eloquence.
6 Portion, sample.
7 Learning.
8 Flurry, state of excitement.

longing pain at my heart, similar to that caused by home-sickness, and sat looking vacantly in the fire, every now and then heaving a deep sigh. My mother seemed distressed about me, and tried, by every endearing expression, to learn from me the cause of my trouble; but I could not tell her. I just said, 'O, never mind; it's nothing at all. I just feel tired, and will be all right to-morrow.' I retired to bed early that night, just that I might lie with my eyes shut and see her in the dark; and I *did see* her. There was her glorious sweet face still before me, so full of sunny smiles; and the merry twinkle of her soft lustrous eyes—how they made my heart dance. How thankful I was that it was dark, for I could lie still and see her, and nobody there to disturb me, or to break the spell which gave me such happiness. At last I fell asleep; and then, oh, such dreams! There she was a little distance from me, smiling and looking as if she wished to speak to me. In my joy I tried to get near her, but my limbs were so weak I could not walk. Then I tried to speak to her, but found my voice was gone. I tried again and again to speak, and at last succeeded; but the effort awakened me, when I found my mother at my bedside, wiping the perspiration from my face, and in a state of alarm concerning me. I persuaded her to leave me, telling her that I was only dreaming, and would go to sleep again. I slept again, and brighter visions passed before me. I now got near her, talked to her, caressed her, pressed her to my heart; and, in the midst of my bliss, I awakened with the morning light streaming into my room, and my arms entwined around a portion of the bedclothes.

"I got up and dressed, and that same morning, on my way to school, settled in my mind the course I should follow. 'I must not be a child,' I said to myself, 'I must be a man; and the path to her heart must be through that by which I can win distinction, and show myself, in some way or other, superior to all other boys.' And I would here remark, that

this new impulse which I felt stirred within me, sprang from the same source as hass prung true chivalry in all ages. The fountain of love bursting forth for the first time in the virgin soil of the human heart, how purely it wells up, rippling and sparkling in the sunbeams of hope and noble ambition. Under its influence the boy in thought becomes a hero, and longs for manhood and distinction ; and the hero, in the glory of his manhood, draws his noblest inspiration from the smiles of his lady love.

"Give me a man with a heart so ennobled, and a soul so animated by the purest and loftiest of human passions, and he stands there a hero, ready to do, to dare, or to die in the cause of duty and honour."

"Ay, ay, ye're richt," ejaculated old Yacob ; "although I dunno ken if I tak up da meanin' o' da fine lang wirds ye hae sae weel at your finger ends. Yet I tink I ken whaur ye ir, by da meethes[1] o' da subjeck, as we wid say at da haaf.[2] I aye tocht a' my days dat it wis a graand thing ta be earnest an' leethful[3] at your wark, whidder by laand or by sea ; and dis a'm tinkin is sontin laek what ye mean in spaekin' o' love affairs. For instance, if ye're at da sillicks, an' layin' on some leethe, sprootin' da soe[4] weel oot, till da water is clear wi' da lumie,[5] an' keepin' a sharp e'e on your bait, sae as ye can gie your waand[6] a rick[7] da minnit your bait is oot o' sicht, ye'll pilk[8] up da sillicks laek stour, an' your büddie is fue in twa claps o' a lamb's tail ; but if ye sit ipa da stane in a kind o' lazy wy, your huik gets inta da waar,[9] an' da sillicks geng dozin' aboot as if dey wir clumpsed. An' sae at da haaf, I aye saw a lucky man was a leethfu' man ; up as da Lave-rock rave da dim, first at da eela[10] for bait, sets alang da

1 Landmarks. 2 Deep-sea fishing ground. 3 Active, industrious.
4 Limpits chewed and spit in the water to collect the fish.
5 Oil on the surface of the water. 6 A fishing-rod.
7 A sharp upward motion of the rod. 8 Catch quickly.
9 Sea-weed. 10 Place where sillicks or pilticks are caught.

shudder[1] o' da hard grund, catches the snaar[2] o' da tide, hails wi' a easy tow,[3] and comes ashore wi' forty wys o' white fish for twa nichts oot. On da idder hand, da lazy man comes draiglan[4] ashore wi' twa tüogs[5] an' twa brumplicks,[6] an' a lot o' soor yoägs[7] an' ill-washin' scags,[8] id da shot[9] o' his boat; an' den he says it's a' fir want o' luck he canna mak a fishin'.

"Again, no ta mak da comparishun, dere wis my auld saunted grandmidder (rest her soul wi' da Lord). Shü wis a earnest woman in a' shü said an' did. Ay, I mind weel whin shü üsed ta hear wis wir Cattages,[10] an' spak ta wis fir da guid o' wir souls, her een grew bricht wi' a kind o' heavenly licht, an' dan da tears wid trinkle doon her auld widdered cheeks. It aye set me a-greetin mysell; bit catch me ever greetin under a sermon fae da poopit—na, na; no gin I wis ta sit till da day o' Pentecost. Bit Lord be aboot me, I'm clean firyatten mysell, an' keepin' you frae gaen on wi' your story."

"Next day," resumed the hermit, "as I told you, I went to the school, and as I entered I looked anxiously around to see if the dear child had come, but she had not then arrived. I sat down, and commenced to my work, but kept my eyes constantly fixed at the door—my heart beating quick with excitement. After a few minutes' suspense as she entered along with another girl, I almost started from my seat. I breathed so hard, and looked so flurried, that the boy who sat next me said, 'Hilloa! Olla, what's up?' 'Nothing,' I said, and at once recovering myself, I proceeded to carry out the plan I had fixed upon in my own mind. I went up to the teacher, and said, if he pleased, as I could do the most of my work at home, I would be glad to assist him in setting headlines of copies, or helping the scholars with their lessons in

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1 Ridge. 2 Change or turning of the tide, when still water is favourable for fish taking the bait. 3 Fishing-line.
4 Slow or lazy motion. 5 Small ling. 6 Small tusk.
7 Mussels. 8 Herrings taken from the stomach of a fish.
9 The aft division of a boat. 10 Catechism.

arithmetic; to which he replied, 'That's very kind of you, Olla; yes, go and help Lelah Halcro with her sum.' O, that I did not faint with joy! Was this my dream of last week come back again to deceive me, or was it reality? Here was the scheme I had been planning all the way to the school just come as I wished it. Did the teacher really know all about my little love affair? I mentally asked; and has his consideration and kindness thus raised me to the highest pitch and pinnacle of human happiness as a reward for my offered services? With downcast looks, and my cheeks glowing like live coals, I timidly crossed the floor, and went to the table where she was seated. Blushing, and almost out of breath, I faltered out, in a kind of a whisper, 'Shall I help you with your sums?' 'Oh yes, if you please,' she answered, in the most silvery tones that had ever fallen upon my ear, at the same time looking in my face with a kind of innocent child-like wonder in the expression of her face, which nearly put me as far from solving the problem as herself, plain as it had been to me for years. I need scarcely say, that after this I omitted no opportunity of making myself useful and agreeable to this object of my affections. In setting the headlines of her copy, how beautifully I swept round the hair-strokes of my capitals! how smooth and perfect the dashes were! Her presence was the good genius which inspired me, and made me perform everything I touched as with the hand of a master."

CHAPTER III.

Love various minds does variously inspire:
He stirs in gentle natures gentle fire,
Like that of incense on the altars laid;
But raging flames tempestuous souls invade.
DRYDEN.

"ONE day Lelah's sums were more than usually troublesome, and, instead of standing in front of the desk, I came and sat down beside her, mentally following her nimble pencil on the slate, and answering her enquiries in the softest and most loving tone of voice I could command. I crept close to her side, and, almost unconsciously, put my arm round her waist, which she perceiving, put her hand round and pushed my arm away; but she did it so gently, and with such a blush, and giving my hand at the same time, as I imagined, a gentle squeeze. Oh, how can I tell my ecstasy! As the poet says—

'It was bliss beyond compare.'

Such an amount of perfect happiness—so pure, so heavenlike—so free from all the dross of earthly pleasures! It was enough to sweeten a whole life of grief and disappointment. But I was not destined to bask long in the sunshine of my happiness. Clouds were gathering upon the horizon of the future, and I was not to be allowed to sip the sweet nectar of love without being stung by the thorns which too often surround it. And so it has ever been in human life: light and darkness, sunshine and showers, fall upon our heads as we travel onwards to the tomb. The Creator has ordered it so for the best and wisest purposes; and, could we comprehend the complex plan of His moral government, we should see harmony, beauty, goodness, and love, where, as it is, we sometimes can only discern faint glimmerings of light amid darkness and mystery."

"Ay, ay," responded old Yacob, "dats effectual callin', I'm tinkin, ye're at; an' it's just ipa da point o' my tongue ta say dat da minister, I tink, says ower muckle aboot effectual callin', da elect, ordination, and idder lang-nebbed doctrines.[1] Da idder day, whin I happened ta be spaekin ta Rasme o' da Heilik, an' he was tellin' me what a hardship he was in fir meal dis year, afore he got it aff da eart;[2] an' noo dat every craeter he hed wis sauld, an' he ower head an' ears in debt ta da laird, he wid just hae ta geng an' set aff da land.[3] Says I ta him, says I, 'Rasme, hoo is it dat du's sae ill aff, whin dy neebor man hes a fouth o' a' thing, an' a well-stocked byre o' baith kye and horses?' Says he, 'I'm süre I never ken. Some wy or idder it's no ordeened dat things süd dü wi' me.' 'Na, na,' says I, 'Rasme; dere's naithin' ordeened aboot it. Du kens last voar[4] du lüte[5] dy horse eat tangles an' redwir till he wis at da bons[6] o' meesery, an' in coorse he hed ta dee; an' da hairst afore dat du didna maw da half o' dy girs; an' whin da voar cam, dy kye fell a-liftin'[7] fir want o' meat; sae du needna blame ordination fir what ordination hes naithin' ta dü wi'.' An' sae say I noo; it's a' weel eneuch fir da minister ta preach aboot ordination dat hes his teinds as süre as da bank, an' his pouther fools,[8] fat kye, Scots horses, an' glebe wi' a weel-bigged wa' roond aboot it, and wha needs na care whidder it snaws or rains. Bit it'll no dü for wis dat has ta fecht i'da face o' da sea, an' elt[9] i'da dirt o' da eart for a meal bannock or a tatie skin. Providence ordeened dat we sud wirk leithfully; an', if we dunna dü dat, He ordeened dat we sud sterve. Bit ye wir sayin' dat things wir beginnin' to luik unkin[10] blate wi' you at da schule."

"Yes," continued the hermit; "I found that others were

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1 See Note F. Calvinism.
2 Earth. 3 Give up the farm. 4 Spring.
5 Let, or allowed. 6 Resembling a skeleton.
7 Unable to rise from weakness; requiring to be assisted.
8 Tithe poultry, formerly exacted by Shetland lairds and ministers.
9 Grovel. 10 Very.

smitten as well as myself with the fascinating charms of this beautiful child—*my* Lelah, as I loved to call her, when nobody heard me; and I found that I had rivals in boys older than I was—and one especially, who greatly alarmed me, not because he was bigger than I was—for, had he been like Goliath, it would have been no difference to me—but my dread of him was because he was a more handsome boy than myself; and I watched him as a trusty sentinel watches a spy from the enemy's camp. One day, after the school had assembled, he went and sat down on the form beside Lelah, and commenced whispering to her, and laughing; and I thought I saw her once or twice give him a look of fondness. Oh, how my blood boiled within my veins! I felt sick with rage, and would have dashed at him there and then, if it had not been for disgracing myself and the school. The play-hour was at one o'clock, and I bottled up my indignation till then. After we got out on the green, I went up to him, pale and trembling with rage, and said, 'I want to speak to you, Jack' (his name was Jack Smith). Says he, 'What is it?' Says I, 'What business had you to speak to Lelah Halcro the way you did to day?' (I knew this was an impertinent question, but I was boiling with rage, and wished to fight him). Says he, 'What's your business who I speak to? I have a precious good mind to thrash you within an inch of your life for your impertinence, you young good-for-nothing Scotch sodger that you are.' 'Say that again!' cried I, as, with clenched fist, I dashed a blow in his face that brought the blood in a stream down his breast.

"'Here's a row,' shouted the boys, as they closed in a ring around us. We now stripped, and throwing our jackets as signals in the arms of our respective comrades whom we expected to act as seconds, we went scientifically to work—wheeling, backing, dodging. We fought shy for a time, parting at each round without drawing blood, for we were the two best boxers in the school. But at length getting a smart whip

under the right ear, I struck him hard, and we fought where we stood, darting our fists like little engines of war into each other's faces. My opponent showed more coolness than I did, and did not expend his strength so fast, and my error in this respect I had bitterly to rue; for as I felt my strength failing through loss of blood (my shirt was saturated with it), my foe struck harder than ever. One or two more rounds, and I sank exhausted on the ground. 'Have you got enough now?' exclaimed my adversary with a sneer. 'Say beat,' roared the boys. 'Never!' I replied, as I sprang to my feet with all the energy of love and despair, and dashed such a terrific blow on his left temple as laid him prostrate on the earth, and there he lay motionless. 'A drawn battle—no more of that,' exclaimed the boys, as they rushed betwixt us. 'There's the master,' shouted a boy in the outer part of the ring; and all scampered into the school as fast as they could, leaving me and my vanquished adversary, who had now revived, to hirple to our respective homes as fast as our stiff and sore limbs could carry us. On my way home I went to a burn and washed my face, buttoning my jacket close about me, so as to conceal my blood-stained shirt. As I entered the house, and my mother saw my swollen and discoloured face, she threw her arms around my neck, and sobbed till her heart was like to break. 'O! who has touched you?' she cried, as the tears coursed down her cheeks. 'Tell me, tell me, who did it?' 'I fought Jack Smith—that's all,' I replied; 'and I'll fight him again, as soon as I am able, mother.' 'Oh! you wicked boy,' she exclaimed, as she unbuttoned my jacket and helped me off with my bloody shirt, getting me a clean one, and putting me to bed. I slept none that night—not that I thought of my wounds and bruises; my distress and anxiety was what Lelah would think of it all when she heard it. In the morning my mother brought my breakfast on a small tray, and on it a little neat letter sealed with blue wax. I knew the writing in a

moment, and my heart bounded in a flutter. A strange expression passed over my mother's face as she withdrew and left me, not to eat my breakfast, but first with trembling hand to break the seal of this most precious billet-doux. I did so, and read as follows:—

'DEAREST OLLA—Oh! you bad boy, you foolish boy, why would you fight Jack Smith, and get yourself hurt so, and all about such a worthless thing as me? Oh dear! what shall I do? I am so grieved about it. Dearest Olla, are you much hurt? do tell me. How much I will miss you at the school; do get better for my sake. Oh! you foolish boy, how could you think I cared anything for Jack Smith? Now I hope that will please you and make you better, and then you will not fight him any more. Write me if you cannot come to school to-morrow.—Your (I cannot say more)

'LELAH HALCRO.'

Before I got to the end, the tears were running down my cheeks. I folded the letter, and putting it in my bosom, covered my face with my hands, and sobbed in the fulness of my joy.

"After I got calm, I ate my breakfast, and then got up and dressed. Looking in the glass, I was surprised to find what a strange-looking face I had; but never did warrior feel more proud of his scars; never did knight in the age of chivalry shed his blood in defence of youth and beauty, and feel more pleasure in its loss. I danced about the room in perfect ecstasy at the thought of my good fortune, and that I had the pluck to fight Jack Smith. But for this, how long I might have waited without knowing whether Lelah loved me or not; and without the fight I would not have got that dear little letter from her. I sat down on a chair and read it over and over again; and as I read the words I thought I just heard her sweet silvery voice speaking them, and saw the soft timid glance of her lustrous loving eyes beaming upon me. I pressed to my lips that part of the letter where her name was, put it in my bosom, and then went to an old desk where I kept my pens

and paper, and other odds and ends, and set about answering her letter as follows, for I kept a copy of it, and will now read it to you :—

'My Dear Lelah—Oh ! how kind of you to send me a letter, and to say you do not love Jack Smith. Dear Lelah, how happy I am that I fought him, or else you would not have sent me this nice letter. I know you did not want me to fight, but I loved to do it for your sake ; and when my shirt was all wet with blood, I was happy it was for you. Dear Lelah, now when you say you do not love him, I will not fight him any more, nor any boy you don't love. I will come to the school in two or three days, when my face is better, and then I will help you with your sums or anything else. Don't let Jack Smith help you if he comes to the school before me. Dearest Lelah, I love you very much, and dream beautiful dreams about you, but I know you will not tell any one about it. I am going to send this by Tom Flaws when he comes, as I think he will call to see me to-day. Your ever loving till death,

'Olla Ollison.

'P.S.—Tom Flaws has not come yet, so, as I had nothing else to do, I have made some verses about you which I hope you will like. You will find them enclosed in this letter. O. O.'

'The Verses.

'Like the sweet fragrant primrose when summer is nigh,
Like the crimson-tipped daisy with bright golden eye ;
So sweet is my Lelah, so lovely and fair ;
Wherever she wanders, my heart wanders there.
O Lelah, dear Lelah, how oft do I sigh
For the day that unites us, dear Lelah and I.

'Like a sportive young lammie that skips o'er the green,
When white wi' bright daisies in beauty 'tis seen,
My Lelah wi' feet like a fairy does flee ;
O weel I love Lelah, and Lelah loves me.
O Lelah, dear Lelah, how oft do I sigh
For the cot we shall live in, dear Lelah and I.

'Like the soft murmuring waves at the close of the day,
Like the caloo's soft note when she soars far away,
So sweet is thy voice when it sounds in mine ear,
When it thrills my fond heart, O Lelah, my dear.

O Lelah, dear Lelah, how oft do I sigh
For dear wedded love between Lelah and I.

'Like the fairest azure of serene summer sky,
So soft and so lovely is Lelah's bright eye;
Her smile is like sunshine on a soft rippling sea—
O long be that sunshine, dear Lelah, on me.
O Lelah, dear Lelah, how oft do I sigh
For the hearth of our home, my dear Lelah and I.

'O Lelah, great ships may sail without sails,
The smallest of fishes may be turned into whales;
The rocks they may rend, and the mountains remove,
But I ne'er shall prove false to thee, Lelah, my love.
O Lelah, dear Lelah, oft this do I sigh,
"For Lelah I live, and for Lelah I'd die."

'N.B.—I think this sings to the tune of a song I have heard my grandmother sing, called 'Logie o' Buchan.' If you know that tune, try, dear Lelah, and sing my verses when nobody hears you.'"

CHAPTER IV.

Sweet as first love, and wild with all regret,
O! death in life, the days that are no more.
TENNYSON.

"YE wir quite richt dere, Mr Ollison," exclaimed old Yacob; "dere is a sang ca'd 'Logie o' Buchan,' an' a bonnie sang it is, though I wadna care ta remark dat your ain is no far ahint it, barrin' da last verse, dat just soonds a sma' thing ower strong for an auld lug; for it taks a hantle less den turnin' sillicks into whaales, or rivin' up hills an' muntins to cüil doon da heat o' calf-love. An, leck o' me! what a difference is atween young love and auld—I wis gaen ta say auld love, bit Lord kens if ever sic a thing wis kent o'. Dere is na muckle love atween a auld horse an' his tether, whin dat tether keeps him fae gettin' a mouthfu' o' girse aff a bonnie green bank, just a peerie bit farder awa den he can rake tae. No ta geng farder awa, dere wis Solomon himsell, in his young days, wha could say bonnier things aboot da lasses den he did? ca'in' dem lillies, an' roses, an' idder far awa floors, dat I never saw a' my days, nor ken I what like dey ir; bit hear him whin he turns auld, though he hed sae mony o' dem ta wale among, he says—'It's naithen bit vanity and vexation o' speerit.' Lord pity him if ony o' dem hed a tongue like wir auld wife, for den he might weel say it wis vexation o' speerit. Bit dis is no what I wis ettlin ta speak o'; what I was gaen for to remark wis da great difference atween wratin' verses whin ye're young an' whin ye're auld. I never hed muckle gift i' da wy o' makin' verses a' my days; for as for wratin' dem, I could wrate nane; but ae nicht whin I wis sittin' windin[1] simmits[2] at wir fireside, an' da auld wife's tongue wis gaen laek da clapper o' a

[1] Twisting. [2] Ropes made of straw, bent, or rashes.

mill, says I ta mysell, says I, if I could bit mak twa or tree verses o' a bit sang, an just begin ta sing whin shü begins ta yatter,[1] it might truly deaden da noise, if it did na pit her aff o' it atagedder; sae I sets ta wark i' my ain mind, an' gets it ta clink brawly weel; an' dis wis it—

'Laek da clapper o' da mill
In a muckle speet o' water,
Wir auld wife's tongue
Gengs yatter, yatter, yatter.

'Laek da roar o' winter brack,
Laek da rumble o' da sea, /si·/
Her din in my lugs,
Maks a waefu melodie.

'Fae da rivin' o' da dim,
Till da sun is in da water, /watər/
Her auld waggin tongue,
Gengs yatter, yatter, yatter.

'Lord, make her dumb,
Or me stane deaf; /di·f/
Idder wy is welcome,
If I get relief.'

"Whin I sang dis shü was perfectly dumfoondered, an' we hed a quiet sough for a ouk[2] or sae efter dat, an' I tocht it wis gaen to be a perfect success, till shü got inta da wy o' firin' shots atween da verses. Whin it cam ta dat, dan my sang wis o' nae mair üse nor a penny whistle in a norwast storm, sae I maun just thole it noo da best wy I can till by da coorse o' natur I get as deaf as a door nail, an dat canna come ower shüne; although I'm just tinkin dat whin my lugs gets even as close as da sole o' your fit, I'll still hear da soond o' her in trow my skull, just as ye hear da ring o' da metal whin ye gie a knock ipa da boddom o' dat muckle kettle dats lyin' whombled dere under your kist; bit Lord be aboot me, I'm surely for-

[1] Scold. [2] Week.

yattin mysell atagedder, and keepin' you frae gettin on wi' your ain story, Mr Ollison."

"A few days after this," continued the hermit. "I went to the school, and as I entered I observed an expression of pleasure pass over Lelah's lovely face; and, going up to the table where she sat, I whispered, 'I am all right now, Lelah.'"

"I now began to excel in everything I did—my Lelah was the very sun and centre of my being, the object to which all my hopes and aims pointed, the genius which presided over me while I pursued the path of duty and progress. In everything I attempted to do, the ever-recurring questions which arose in my mind were, what will Lelah think of it? Will she think more of me when she hears I have done this? At home I studied hard, revising what I had learned, and reading the few books I possessed so often that I could almost repeat their contents from memory. In this way I acquired a large stock of information far beyond that possessed by anyone in the parish, either old or young. In continuing to assist the teacher, how proud I was to show off my superior knowledge before the school, as I stood in front of a class acting the dominie, and astonishing the children by the wonderful things I could tell them; and how intense was my delight when Lelah would steal a glance at me, and show, by the expression of joy which passed over her countenance, how much she was delighted in my success.

"All my spare time at home was employed as an amateur mechanic. I constructed miniature watermills, windmills, full-rigged ships, chairs, tables, tubs, cogs, &c.—all perfect models on a perfect scale; and all this with no other tool but my jockteleg,[1] so that by-and-by all over the parish I got the name of 'the wonderful boy.'

"I take pleasure in dwelling upon these sweet reminiscences of the past, because they are dear to my heart, and can

[1] Pocket knife.

only perish from my memory with life itself; and I also prize them for this other reason, that I believe no power on earth but religion itself can so truly ennoble human nature as virtuous love when it is felt as a pure passion, and unalloyed by any selfish or worldly consideration.

"See it budding forth in that boy or girl's heart for the first time, how tenderly it grows! How sweetly it blossoms! Its perfumes are born in soft sighs, and wafted in loving whispers to the dear loved one. Alas! that ever avarice, selfishness, or worldly interest should like a mildew blight its tender bloom. Alas! that vice, like a canker, should strike at its slender root, or scatter its bright blossoms in the dust.

"The tender passion in early youth comes forth like a mountain stream, sparkling in joyous murmurs, and reflecting heaven in its transparent beauty. As such God made it, and as such He intended it to flow through all time, gladdening and blessing mankind; but, alas! how soon, and how often, does the stream grow muddy, as in its onward progress it stirs the impurities which lie hidden in the dark channels of the human heart; or, bounding away like a mountain torrent, it dashes on in whirling eddies of uncontrolled passion, carrying its victims into the awful maelstrom of inevitable and irretrievable ruin.

"Eh! Mr Ollison, what a gift ye hae," exclaimed old Yacob, lifting both his hands and looking up to the roof; "in place o' livin' in a bit hovel here by yoursell, an' makin' your ain bit meat like a boddie that gengs wi' der staff[1] an' der cashie, ye sud a been waggin' your pow in a poopit, wi' a muckle stipend, a grand manse, servants an' sairin men to wait ipa you; wi' a glebe o' guid infield[2] land, fat chuckies[3] ta your dinner, an' ance in da ouk ta luik ower a lock o' auld sermons, an' wale ane o' dem fir da Sunday; an' dis pits in my mind to say dat I never cud see da meanin' o' feeding da minister sae weel, fir a' my days I aye fan dat a fat man wis a lazy man.

[1] Meaning a beggar. [2] Older cultivated land. [3] Fowls.

Dere wis Willie Bigiltie dat rowed ta da sea wi' me ae simmer. He never wis düne eatin' liver muggies[1] till, Lord bliss me, as he turned as fat as a tiestie,[2] and as round as a pellick,[3] and yet for a' dat, he wis o' nae mair üse in da boat nor a ballish stane.[4] An' sae I'm just tinkin' it's wi' da ministers—da mair dey hae o' da flesh, the less de'll hae o' da Speeret; an' whin onything o' dat kind is gaen, I'm tinkin' it comes mair fae da whiskey keg den fae da Lord. Bit whin I speak dis wy, ye mauna tink dat I'm an infeedel for a' dat. I'm read my Bible, bit aftener da Testament--for der's mony fiklie wirds i' da Bible dat I can mak bit little o'—bit as far as I'm read, I come ta dis conclusion, dat it maun be easier to mak Christians noo-a-days den it wis lang sin syne, or da wark is no sae weel düne. Dere was Paul da apostle, luik at him in his wanderin', watchin', prayin', fastin', an' sufferin' a' kinds o' ill-usage by da haethens he hed to fecht among—an' a' dis afore he could mak Christians o' dem. Noo readin' a bit sermon as yallow in da paper as my wellicot[5] ance upon a Sunday is a' dats tocht o'. Nae doot it's easier for da minister tae ca' his flock inta da crue[6] ance i' da ouk den rin efter dem here an' dere trow da ouk-days, whin da horses an' kye, an' da hubbleshue o' oot door wark taks a' his time; sae dat a mony a puir body may be crossin' da waters o' Jordan atween da Monaday an' da Setterday, an' he kens little aboot it. Puir craters! mony a ane o' dem wid need a bit prayer or a wird o' comfort whin der in da 'vailey o' da sheddo' o' death,' as da Scripter ca's it. Noo, it's no sae muckle wi' da ministers I fin' fau't as wi' da kirk dat maks da ministers. Human nater is human nater; an' if onybody is paid weel for düin naethin', or da neist tae it, wha wid be sic a füle as wirk mair den he can help. Whin a young chap gets a kirk, dü ye no think, Mr

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1 Fish stomachs filled with liver, and boiled.
2 Black Gullimot (*Uria Grylle.*)
3 Porpoise (*Phocæna Communis*).
4 Ballast.
5 Flannel shirt.
6 Enclosure for driving sheep in when they are to be "rued," or shorn.

Ollison, dat it wid be a great advantage tae himsell if da kirk wis ta say ta him, 'Noo, Mr Minister, we're no gaen to gie you a selery by da year, bit just pay you by da piece ; sae if ye wirk weel ye'll be weel paid for it, an' your sermons will be fae half-a-croon ta twinty shillens, accordin' tae da quality.' If dis wis düne, ye wid shüne see a mony a burnin' an' a shinin' licht, whaur noo we hae na da blink o' a üllie collie.[1] Bit it's no a lee dat wir auld wife says 'Whin I ance begin to speak, I never ken whin ta haud my tongue.' Whaur wir ye wi' your story agen, Mr Ollison (an beggin' mony pardons for interrupin' you).'

[1] The most primitive form of lamp now known, and similar in some respects to that used by the ancient Romans, and found in the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

CHAPTER V.

A mermaid sat in her emerald ha',
And played on her coral lute.
Ballad.

"After I had been at the school," resumed the hermit, "Adam Yunson, the ruling elder of the district, called at the school one day, and said he wished to speak to me. So I followed him outside, when he said, 'Olla, I hear that you are a very clever lad, and as we want a teacher at Hallowmas for the Chancein School, we have decided to give you the offer of it, as we believe there is no lad in the parish better qualified.'

"In reply, I thanked him for what I considered the highest honour that could have been conferred upon me; and said I would do my utmost to give satisfaction, and should be ready to commence the school at the time mentioned. My renuneration was to be £4 in the half-year; and this, to my mind, looked like a sum that I should not know how to spend; as up to this time I had never possessed a shilling of my own. After shaking hands with my kind friend, I bounded into the school, but slackened my pace as I passed the inner door, for the teacher maintained very rigid discipline. I went up to where Lelah was sitting, and whispered, 'Lelah, I am going to be a teacher. I have got the Chancein School.'

"'No!' she exclaimed in a whisper, while her lovely eyes beamed with a mixed expression of wonder and delight, and a soft blush passed over her face, but quickly leaving the white and crimson as pure as before.

"'Yes,' I replied; 'it is quite true, but I will tell you all about it when we get out.' After the school was dismissed, I got the opportunity of telling Lelah that it was all settled that I

was to get the school; that I was to have £4 in the half-year, and that I was to buy her a present when I got my first quarter's salary.

"The harvest now being near at hand, I did not go longer to school, as I wished to assist my uncle in the fields; for I was an expert hand at binding sheaves, and all kinds of harvest work. The season happened to be unusually fine; and during the time of the harvest moon, Lelah and I used to walk together down to the sea-shore. How beautiful it was when, in a cloudless sky, the full-orbed moon rode in silent glory in the star-spangled firmament, and cast a silvery sheen on the grey lichen-covered stones, moss-covered knolls, and every object around. One such lovely evening we were both seated on a fragment of rock at the top of the heilik where I met you last night, and we sat gazing silently at the moon. Above the moon was a bright star, so bright and beautiful that it cast a halo of light around it as it shone and twinkled in its glorious soft light against the dark-blue sky. Upon this star Lelah fixed her gaze, and seemed lost in thought. O! how beautiful she looked then—just like an angel adoring some great Being above. Her eyes were so full of heavenly light, and her features looked so beautiful in the pale-moonshine, that I drew closer towards her, and, almost before she was aware, impressed a kiss upon her soft rosy lips. This awakened her from her reverie, and she exclaimed with something like a frown, 'Oh! Olla, you bad boy.'

"This was my first kiss (for I was the most bashful boy that ever lived). O! how shall I express the bliss of that moment. How often have I wished since then that some power from above could have fixed me in that state of happiness, and rendered me for ever incapable of feeling any other emotion; but, alas! like our first parents, this Eden of love was destined one day to become a valley of tears, full of sighings and heart-rending grief. But let me not dwell upon this

sad part of my story just yet. After a little I said—'Dear Lelah, what were you thinking about when you were looking so earnestly at yon bright star?' 'O! Olla,' she replied, 'I was thinking how far it might be from us to the star; and then if we were there, how far it might be to something else; and so on and on: and I wondered if ever there could be an end; when, you bad boy, you put me off the thought. Do you think, Olla, there is any end to the sky away there?' I said, 'Dear Lelah, what strange questions you ask. No, I think there can be no end to the sky; for when you come to the end of anything, there must always be something beyond that—either space or substance. But it makes my head reel to think of it, so let us speak about mermaids, or something of that sort.'"

"Ay, ay," exclaimed old Yacob; "Your spaekin' o' mermaids pits in my mind da story o' Simon o' Gott, dat ye hae mebbe heard o'. He was hailen his lines aff da Scord o' Bressa, wi' a sooth lipper[1] ida water an' da fa' o' a slack tide. Efter he hed aboot twa packies[2] an' a half in, he fan a heavy wecht ipa da tow. Says he ta da boy dat sat ida cavil,[3] says he, 'boy, hae da fish-staff[4] clair,[5] an lüik oot for a licht.' Sae efter a peerie[6] start da boy says, says he, 'I see a licht.' 'What is it?' says Simon; is it a masgum[7] or a turbot?' 'Na, na,' says da boy, 'it's a boddie.' 'Boy,' says Simon, 'if du maks a füle o' me, I'll lay dis boatic[8] across dy back.' 'Na, na,' says da boy, 'I'm truly no makin' a füle o' you;' an' wi dat, Lord preserve us, if dere didna bout[9] up afore his very face a most beautiful mermaid, wi' lang yallow hair hingin' doon her back, an' a

1 The wavelet or ripple.
2 The quantity of lines each fisherman owns.
3 To take the hook from the mouth of a fish; also the place in the boat where a man or boy performs this operation.
4 Large iron hook with wooden handle for striking into the fish, and lifting them into the boat.
5 Ready. 6 Short time.
7 Common Angler, or Fishing Frog *(Rana Piscatrix)*.
8 A long pole with a hook and spike at the end.
9 To rise quickly above the surface.

muckle turbot gogar[1] catched her right under da shin. 'Haund me da tullie,'[2] roared Simon, an' wi' dat he caa'd da knife inta da puir crater's breist, an' snappin da tome[3] shü fell back i' da sea cryin', 'Ales! ales!' and sank awa doon, lavin' a straem o' red bluid a' da wy efter her. Fae dat day ta da day o' his death Simon o' Gott never trave.[4] Dat year da storrie[5] wirm üte his corn an' taties oot o' da rüit. His kye fell a liftin' an' deid, da taen efter da tidder spriklin[6] an' sküil-brüilin[7] in da most awfil wy. His horses guid ower da banks, an' he wüor up till he cam ta da bones o' meesery himsell, an' da last time dat he wis seen wis standin' doon a peerie bit abüin da laybrak; whin a winderful kind o' green mist cam up oot o' da sea, an' closed aroond him, an' whin it cleared awa, dere wis da place, an' awa wis Simon; never seen or heard tell o' more.

"Den dere wis Maikie o' Fradigal: ae simmer mornin' whin he wis i' da ebb—it wis just aboot da first taws[8] o' daylicht, an' as beautiful a mornin' as could come oot o' da lift.[9] It was a ream[10] calm, an' no a lipper aboot da shore; he wis pickin' at da side o' a muckle ebb stane, whin liftin' up his head ta rake[11] ower his hovie,[12] Lord preserve us, if dere wisna sittin' upon a aff skerrie, a perrie bit fae da shore, a most beautiful mermaid, combin' her bonnie yallow hair; an' happenin' to luik a bit nearer ta him, he sees a bonnie silkey[13] skin lyin' ipa da tap o' a stane, rowed togedder just as if it hed been a shald dat a woman bodie hed flung aff her shudders. Whin he sees dis, he maks a spang[14] for it, an' rowin it up anunder his airm, he sits doon a peerie[15] start just ta see what shü wid dü. He said he never saw a prettier woman fae da

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1 A large fish hook.
2 A fisherman's knife.
3 A hair line.
4 Throve.
5 A grub.
6 Struggling.
7 Moaning; low bellowing.
8 First streaks of twilight.
9 Sky.
10 Soft.
11 Reach.
12 A small lempit creel.
13 A seal.
14 Spring.
15 A moment.

oor dat he wis born. The sun wis just comin' oot o' da water, an' da bonnie saft mornin' licht fell apon her face, an' doon ower her body. Shü wis dat white an' pure, an' sae beautifully formed every wy. He hed aye heard dat mermaids wis laek a fish fae da wais' an' doon: bit, Lord save him, he said, shü hed as bonny a pair o' legs an' feet as ever cam in da door o' da Ness Kirk. Efter sittin' twa or tree minnits, he gae a kind o' a host,[1] whin shü luiked aboot an' jumped aff da skerrie, an' cam weddin' in till shü wis aboot half oot o' da water, whin shü saw dat he hed her skin under his airm—for dis skin wis hers—an' its da wy dat mermaids wupples der feet in dis skin o' ders dat made folk tink dat dey hed da tail o' a fish. Sae as I wis sayin', shü staunds in da water, an pointin' her bonnie haund till him, says (she spak English, an' I'm no very guid at dat): 'Mortal, give me back my skin. Why wouldst thou steal from me that which can do thee little good, and makes me poor indeed?' "Na, na, my bonnie leddie,' says Maikie; 'Lord forbid dat I sud hurt a hair o' your bonnie head, or tak awa your bit skin, unless it wis ta get you sontin far better to pit on; an' if ye wid just bide a glisk whaur ye ir, I wid rin hame for a sark o' my midder's; her dimity coat, an' her pepper an' saut mantle, wid hap ye weel; for though its simmer, ye canna be ower warm at dis time o' da mornin', staundin' i' da cauld water yonder.'

"'Mortal,' says da mermaid again, 'tempt me not. I desire to return to the emerald halls and the coral caves of my ancestors, and to sing sweet songs to my brave Knight Coraldova, who fights the sea-lions, and slays the great sea-serpent. Last night, by the pale moonlight, he left me to hunt in the great sea-plains, and this morning he returns to find me absent. O! kind mortal, give me my skin, and let me go.'

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[1] Cough.

"'Ye'r richt dere, my bonnie leddie,' says Maikie; 'a kinder mortal never stüd upo' twa legs den Maikie o' Fradigal; an' dis is what I wid ask you ta fin' oot better efter dis. Sae I'll awa hame for da claes, for I'm wae to see you staundin' ony langer dere in da cauld air, although ye'r da bonniest sicht dat ever my twa een saw i' dis world.' Sae wi' dis Maikie spangs up da banks, an' in a jiffey comes back wi' da claes, an' a piece o' wid upon his shudder, dat maybe wid a made sax pair o' clog soles. Sae whin he comes ta da water's edge, he sooms[1] da piece o' wid,[2] an' lays da claes upo' da tap o' it; an' den gies it a bit o' a shiv, an' awa it sails richt till her. Shü seemed ta feel a kind o' saftened at dis, for Maikie wis a decent lad, an' shü seemed ta tink muckle o' his guid sense. Sae shü tüik up da sark an' slippit it ower her head, an' den pat on da rest o' da claes as shü waded ashore. Sae whiniver shü cam upo' da stanes, Maikie cam close up till her, an' cüllied[3] aboot her da best way dat he cud; an' says he, 'Oh! my dear bonnie leddie, I'm sure ye maun hae gotten your death o' cauld. Come hame wi' me dis moment an' get a cup o' tae; it'll revive you, an' den if ye winna bide wi' me, I'll gie ye back your skin wi' a blessin'. But I'll never laeve you mair. If ye tak ta da sea again, I'll follow you, though I sud be smored[4] in da blue deep, or glaped[5] up by a masgum. Sae dünna be angry wi' me, for your bonnie winsome face has set a beatin' ta my heart, an' a birrin' oot at da points o' my taes.' Bit I needna tell mair o' what Maikie said, for, as you will see, he wis in love, as da sayin' is; an' dats a time dat da less dats kent aboot what we say da better; for if wir gettin' inta da kirk or da excise depended upo' da sense o' what we say den, wir shance o' promotion wid be bit sma.

"Bit what I wis gaen ta say wis dis, dat mermaids is just like idder folk—weel pleased ta hear der ain praise. I'm seen

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1 Floats. 2 Wood. 3 Fondled; caressed.
4 Smothered; choked. 5 Swallowed.

a auld osmal lüikin'[1] auld maid, wi' a mooth laek a horse happrick,[2] an' a nose dat could steer a seventy-four, blinkin' her een wi' delicht whin some haveril chap wis makin' a füil o' her, an' tellin' her dat shü wis winderful bonnie. An' sae it's no ta be windered at dat da mermaid wis weel pleased ta hear what shü kent wis true. An' da upshot o' dis wis dat shü güid hame wi' Maikie, an' said naithin' mair aboot her graund Coraldova nor a' his winderful exploits; an' maybe shü said ta hersell da auld proverb, wi' a sma' alteration—'Der's as guid fish *oot* o' da sea as ever yet wis in it.' In coorse Maikie couldna tell his folk dat shü wis a sea-woman, for dat wid a pitten dem oot o' der judgment; although, as fur his midder, as a' body kent, shü wid na hae far ta gaen. Sae he said shü hed come ashore fae a wrack ship, an' dis made a' thing richt; an' he telled dem dat her name wis Mary Mermaid, an', puir bodies, dey kent nae better den dat dis wis her rael surname. Sae after a time shu cam in winderfully weel ta der wys o' livin', though, as micht a been expecked, she had a awful likin' for fish; an' shü left her fine English, an' spak just as plain as idder you or me; an' dey wir a' sae weel pleased wi' her dat sax monts after dis her an' Maikie got mairied, an' dey lived wi' da auld folk, an' wir as happy as da day wis lang. Sae dis gengs on for a lock o' years, and der auldest bairns wis grown up ta be muckle rinnin sheelds, whin ae hairst, whin da fedder wis biggin' da screws[3] i' da yard, da peerie boy wis rinnin aboot, whin he sees his fedder layin' a auld dried skin anunder a sheaf (for he aye keeped da skin hoided[4] fae her); sae ders nae mair o' dis, bit in gengs da peerie boy, and tells his midder what he hed seen. Shü hears a' bit says naethin, bit gengs ta her bed as peaceable as ever shü did in her days. Maikie fa's asleep, an' snores awa till daylicht, whin he opens his een, bit his bonnie Mary wis awa. He jimps up, an' slips on upon him,

[1] Ugly; haggard
[2] A small "cashie," or pannier.
[3] Corn stacks.
[4] Hid; concealed.

an' rins oot ta da yard, whin he sees da hale screw a' tirded[1] an' torn aboot da eart, an' da skin clean aff; sae, puir man, he kent what wis what den. He hed a kind o' doot sometime afore dis dat a' wis no richt wi' her; for aye whin shü wid be dandlin' da bairn upon her knee, shü wid sing a sang dat Maikie did no like ower weel. An' dis wis it:—

'A mermaid sat in her emerald ha',
An' played on her coral lute;
An' da fishes a' stood on their tails in a raw,
An' danced wi' a finny foot.

'The whaal and the pellick were at it once,
An' shook their fat sides wi' glee,
To see queer fishes prance in a new fashioned dance,
Ower da bottom o' da deep blue sea.

'Then gie me back my bonnie coral caves,
O gie them back ta me!
For though this is my home, I still love to roam
O'er da shells o' da deep blue sea.

'Sing hey dim diddle, dim diddle, dim diddle,
Sing hey dim diddle, dim dee;
Though this is my home, I still love to roam
O'er da shells o' da deep blue sea?'

"Puir woman! I'm just tinkin she *diddled* hersell oot o' a guid hame; and dat her grand Coraldova widna just be up i' da skies aboot her whin shü cam back. Bit dey woman bodies ir kittle ware ta manage, whidder dey come fae da sea or da land. Mony is da time I'm wissed wir auld wife hed been a mermaid. If shü wid bit rin aff, an' wanted a skin, I wid a gien her a hale coo's hide wi' her, altho' I'd no hed a rivelin[2] on my fit for a twalmont. Bit what's da time wi' your sun marks, Mr Ollison; I'm tinkin it's just time I wis lüikin' efter some lempits for da sillocks da nicht?"

"It is past two o'clock when the sun comes to that part of the floor," replied the hermit, pointing to a square illuminated

[1] Scattered.
[2] A kind of shoe made of untanned cowhide.

spot on the floor, caused by a volume of bright sunlight streaming through a skylight on the roof.

"Ah! well, den I'll just awa', an' I'll be ower blied ta come up da morn, efter brakwast[1] time, an' hear da rest o' your story; for I'm tinkin da best o' it is no come yet."

"Alas! no," exclaimed the hermit, as a tear stole down his cheek; "my tale is soon to become a tale of sorrow, which will harrow my soul to tell; but I am no less anxious that you should hear it; and, indeed, it was chiefly for this purpose I asked you to come to my humble dwelling. But the first portion of my story has occupied more time than I expected."

"Ye may weel say dat, Mr Ollison," exclaimed Yacob. "Ye wir no laek ta ken dat I wis gaen ta tak up da half o' da time wi' my ain clash an' havers; bit dey auld stories an' bits o' sangs o' my young days comes jimpin in ta my mind whin ye're spakin' o' da sam subjek, dat I canna haud my tongue."

"And there is no reason you should," rejoined the hermit; "for it is really my opinion, that if what we have both said were written down, your stories would be considered more interesting than mine."

"Oh! you're makin' a füle o' me noo, Mr Ollison," said Yacob. "Ye see I just spak by rule o' toom,[2] an' accordin' ta nater."

"And that is just where the merit lies, my friend," rejoined the hermit. "It is only the few out of countless multitudes of writers in all ages who have followed your rule; and those few now stand like great land-marks along the pathway of time, flourishing in immortal fame; and this because they came as little children, and sat at the feet of Nature, drank deep of her spirit, and became inspired by the divine power which she imparts to all her true disciples.

"Those who failed were too learned to be taught of simple Nature. They soared above her head, and, like Icarus, lost

[1] Breakfast. [2] Thumb.

their wings, fell, and perished in the dust of the countless forgotten.

"But I am detaining you. I shall be happy to see you to-morrow, as early as you can call."

"Yea, dat sall I," replied old Yacob. "I'll be up efter brakwist time, if da Lord spares me ta see da morn; an' sae guid day be wi' you, Mr Ollison."

And with this parting salutation the old man lifted the wooden latch of the low door of the hermit's cottage, and was soon far on his way down the rugged slope which descends from the top of the Ness to the village of Trosswick.

CHAPTER VI.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatius,
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.
SHAKESPEARE.

YACOB'S cottage stood at the east end of the village, with its gable towards the sea. It consisted of one long apartment, divided into "but and ben" by two wooden beds or huge square boxes, with sliding doors in front, through which the sleepers entered at night, and made their exit in the morning. These "box beds" were placed towards each other, and their backs to the wall. The passage between the two beds was covered over the top with pieces of boat's boards, which formed a lame[1] for laying lines, cashies, büddies,[2] skinjups,[3] sea-boots, and other articles requiring to occupy this elevated position. On the wall, and tied with a piece of boucht,[4] hung a rack[5] for the crockery, spoons, &c. Under this rack, and close to the wall, stood an old oak table, with a very deep drawer, containing Yacob's pipe, his sealskin cash,[6] with some Dutch shag in it; sillock flees,[7] ooin treed,[8] a' auld loopick,[9] a muckle tully, a peerie gipper,[10] a pawn,[11] an' a sail needle, a tome-spinner[12] made of peat; a yarkin allishen,[13] a Norway ladle, a

1 Loft.
2 Creels made of straw and "simmits," or of dried dock stems.
3 Jacket or frock made of tanned calf or sheep skin.
4 Fishing-line.
5 A kind of press without doors for holding dishes, &c.
6 Tobacco-pouch.
7 Fishing flies.
8 Woollen thread.
9 Spoon with a short handle.
10 Small knife for gutting herring.
11 Thimble fixed in a leather band going round the hand; used by sailmakers.
12 A kind of whorl used for twisting hair-lines.
13 An outseam awl.

gruel tree,[1] a cashie-needle,[2] with a variety of smaller articles.

On the other side of the cottage, formed of two planks of drift-wood, stood a sort of bench resting on uprights, and having cross pieces fixed into the wall, and on this bench stood one old green painted sea-chest, one old-fashioned land-chest, and one well worn trunk covered with sealskin, but beginning to look bald on the lid and corners. Under this same bench, as a convenient place for setting household utensils, stood the muckle kettle, the peerie kettle, the muckle pot, and the peerie pot, one washing sae,[3] one small tub, and one reamicle.[4] The rest of the furniture of the "but-end" consisted of five oak chairs, with very high backs and fir seats, a creepy stool, two seddicks,[5] one high-backed straen[6] chair which stood in the corner, being old Mrs Yacob's private property.

In the "ben-end" the furniture consisted of the kirn, and the kirn-staff, the milk-keg standing on a chair with a piece of canvas over the top of it; then there was one barrel of oat-meal, one barrel of bere-meal, one buggie[7] with some burstin[8] in it, one groff siv,[9] one sma' siv, and a weight.[10]

The floor but and ben was formed of earth and clay, which time and sweeping had rendered quite hard and smooth.

The roof was covered with divits,[11] having straw and

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1 Porridge-stick.
2 Wooden needle for finishing the rims of "cashies" and "buddies."
3 Tub with "lugs" for lifting by.
4 Small shallow tub used for holding milk, porridge, &c.
5 A stool made of straw.
6 Made of straw.
7 Skin bag made of an entire tanned sheepskin.
8 Meal made from bere or barley toasted brown in a kettle placed over the fire and ground in a quern.
9 Coarse—a sieve with a larger size of holes.
10 Fanner made of an untanned sheepskin stretched on a large hoop, on which the grain is repeatedly thrown up and caught until the chaff or awns are separated.
11 Oblong pieces of thin dried turf for thatching houses with.

simmits on the outside. Two "lums" on the ridge served the double purpose of letting out the smoke and in the light. Against the gable wall of the but-end stood the back stane.[1] The hearth-stone was composed of several pieces of irregularly shaped flat stones raised a few inches above the floor. On this hearth-stane stood the "boiler" on the one side, and the tea-pot on the other, and the brand iron and "taings" lying in front.

As old Yacob entered, his ear caught the prelude of the coming storm. This was a kind of low crooning guttural sound the old woman indulged in when she was brimful of wrath.

A new peat fire had been put on, and the day being calm, the lazy smoke seemed more inclined to remain inside than to go out the lums, as it ought to have done. It therefore packed itself so closely "but and ben" as to form a sort of moving ceiling a few feet from the ground—dense and dark above this line, but comparatively clear below. Old Yacob, therefore, on stepping over the floor, had the upper part of his body enveloped in thick darkness, with his legs only visible, so that he was within a few feet of the hearth before his wrathful help-mate observed him.

"What's a' da reek aboot?" inquired Yacob, as he lowered his head to the level of the line of smoke, and gave two or three short coughs, showing that his bronchial tubes did not take kindly with this rather thick decoction of peat-smoke.

"What's a' da reek about?" echoed old Peggy, for that was her name. "Whaur ill vaige is du been a' day, du püir, simple, düless,[2] saft-head snüol,[3] dat du is, pittin' aff dy time wi' ony clashan'[4] gapeshot[5] bledder o' wind du meets wi' atween dis an' Sumbrahead. An' sae may deil sit i' der gapin

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[1] A large stone against which the fire is placed.
[2] Indolent; incapable. [3] Simpleton. [4] Gossiping.
[5] Open-mouthed.

craigs, an' little less be i' dine, an' I be hale an' weel, an' dats what am no, fir I'm a püir deein' objekd, wi' da life just blatterin'[1] in. Eh! 'my inside,'" pressing both her hands on her sides. "Dis pain 'ill tell a tale yet. Du'll be pleased when du sees my müld sark[2] on, an' my head taen aboot i' da cauld mirk[3] müld," drawing her nose downwards between her thumb and forefinger, and throwing her hands towards the fire, as if she had relieved the aggrieved organ of a considerable quantity of moisture, which the eyes had sent down just in time to give emphasis to those harrowing allusions to "muld sarks" and other spectral paraphernalia.

"Gaen stravaigin,"[4] she continued, "ower da face o' da eart like a benummed monyment, as if du hed nidder horse or coo ta lüik efter. Dere's da puir jures[5] o' kye never hed der stakes muved dis blissed day yet, nor a lempit taen fir gettin' a bone o' fish wi' nor a girspuckle[6] for da beas' meat at nicht, nor da hoes[7] an' skate rumples[8] boiled fir da grice, nor da kail howed dats gaen ower wi' shickenwirt runshick[9] an' melda,[10] nor da twa lives o' sheep dats fastened i' da ness luiked efter, nor da grain o' dry bare taen ta da mill dat's standin' rawin' an' wastin' i' da barn; yea, sürely, sürely, I'm ta be petied; left here, I may say, an' nidder can win or want, a püir beddral[11] creepin' like a wirm faeda bed ta da fire, an' wi' sic a tribe aboot me, witches an' limmers; bit Sathan 'll get his ain some day, an' he'll get dem, an' he'll scaud dem, an' sae micht he; an' Lord grant it fae my sinful hert. Da impedent jaad, Sara o' Northouse, what did shü dü dis mornin' after du guid fort,[12] comes in wi' her fair face, an' says ta me, says shü (mimicking the said Sarah), 'Peggy, will du gie me a perrie[13] air o' bland[14]

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1 Quivering; flickering. 2 Shroud. 3 Dark.
4 Wandering; rambling.
5 A term applied to cattle, and expressive of pity or sympathy.
6 Blade of grass. 7 Dog-fish *(Acanthias Vulgaris.)*
8 Tail and backbone of the skate. 9 Chickweed. 10 Weeds.
11 Bedridden. 12 Went out. 13 Small quantity.
14 Whey of butter-milk.

in dis perrie tinnie ta mak a heat drink ta wir Tamie, as he's gotten a awful torment within his stamick?' 'Yea, dat sall I,' says I, simple bein' dat I wis, whin I oucht ta brained her wi' da taings dat lay at da sheek o' da fire. Bit I tinks o' naithin' till da day whin I gengs ta peck oot da drap o' meilk dat wis standin' i' da keg, sae as to get a bit o' guid butter ta set by fir Yule, an' sae I begins ta kirn ;[1] an' I kirns, an' better kirns, an' winders dere's nae butter comin'; but it cam at last, an' dere it is. 'Sees du dat!'" raising her voice to a shrill scream, and pushing a plate with some very white looking butter in it so close up to Yacob's nose, that it left a little inverted pyramid of oleaginous matter adhering to its broad tip. This he quietly removed by raising his thick, short, honry forefinger, and rubbing it on the knee of his skin "breeks," and which he continued polishing slowly with the palm of his hand, looking abstractedly at the process, as if he were trying to solve the problem in his own mind, whether, according to the law of compensation, the indignity to his nose, with the loss of the butter, was sufficiently balanced by the benefit to his leather unmentionables.

"Lüik at dat," she continued, "lüik at dat! I say, dirt! froth. Whaur's my bonnie yallow butter noo? Whaur's my profit noo? O da diel's buckie! O da devil's witch dat shü is, I hoop shüll swee[2] i' his kettle o' brunstane yet; an' den shüll nidder get bland nor swats[3] ta weet her filthy craig wi'; an' I hoop he'll shoke her ipa da neist bland she drinks. But du'll go dis dis very nicht, whin dü comes hame fae da sillicks, an' get me twa or tree hairs aff ane o' her kye, ta lay anunder da boddom o' my meilk-keg, fir I'll hae my profit back again if I süd rive da rüif abün her head.[4]

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[1] To churn. [2] Singe; scald.

[3] A kind of weak beer, obtained by fermenting meal and "sids," or husks, the liquid being "swats;" and the solid matter which settles at the bottom of the vessel after the husks have been removed by the straining is "sowans."

[4] See Note H. Superstition of the Evil Eye.

"I widna winder ta see da trooker comin' in axin' fir a taings o' fire some mornin' whin I'm kirnin'; bit lit her come, I'll gie her a scaud. Da minnit shü grips da taings o' fire, I'll haud da kirn staff hard ipa da boddom o' da kirn, an' shü'll be burnt aff da banes afore I lit her aff.

"It was Mansie Gordie, honest man, dat telled me ta dü dis. Ugh! ugh! ugh! Eh! dis host 'ill finish me some day. Haand me da crum o' lickerish dats lian' ida rack yonder, Yacob."

This request was made in a low, breathless croon, as if utterly exhausted, and drawing her breath hard as she put the end of the black saccharine stalk under the only remaining stump of a far back molar.

Old Yacob paused, for he knew by experience the wisdom of remaining silent on occasions of this kind, as any remark from him, good, bad, or indifferent, would have raised another storm, which neither coughing nor want of breath might have so providentially brought to a close; he therefore merely inquired, "Hes du ony denner fir me, Peggy?"

"No I," she replied in the same weak voice. "I wisna able ta pit on fish an' taties, sae du'll just hae ta tak a' 'air o' bland an' meal afore du gengs[1] i' da ebb, an' den du'll get a cup o' tea when du comes back agen."

Old Yacob therefore rose from his seat, and lifting the "peerie kettle," which lay "whombled"[2] under the bench already described, he proceeded to prepare the bland and meal over the top of the fire, which now showed a cheerful column of flame rising from the centre.

Just as the mixture attained the proper consistency, which he knew by experience suited his taste, and as he was lifting the kettle from the crook, a voice, in a kind of timid whisper, proceeded from the entrance between the two wooden

[1] Going with the ebb-tide to find limpets.
[2] Turned buttom up.

beds, and said, "Guid day be here!"

"O guid day be ta dee," responded old Yacob. "Come in trow," he added, as a nice looking modest lass just out of her "teens" came in and sat down on a chair. She wore a white short-gown open at the bosom, a blue "claith" petticoat, and a net "mutch" on her head frilled at the sides, but plain on the forehead.

"I wis just wantin' a perrie wird wi' Peggy," explained the fair visitor.

"Peggy," ejaculated old Yacob, for the old woman had sunk back in the recesses of her fortress, the projecting sides of which left nothing in view but her feet and legs. "Peggy, here is somebody wantin' dee," and Peggy's head at once emerged beyond the ramparts.

"O I'm wae fir troublin' you, Peggy," apologised the fair visitor.

"Na! na! it's nae trouble," rejoined Peggy. "Yacob, geng de wis ben ower wi' yon;" and Yacob, obedient to the order from the seat of Government, took his kettle, and went accordingly.

As soon as he had disappeared between the wooden dormitories already described, he removed the milk-keg from its accustomed seat of honour, in order to occupy the place himself, for this was the only solitary chair in the apartment. As he shut the door, Peggy sprang from her seat with great alacrity, and seated herself on a chair close by her visitor. "What was it, my hinnie?" inquired Peggy, laying her hand confidentially on the knee of the former, and drawing in a long breath until her thin lips puckered in over her toothless gums, and the distance between her nose and chin contracted to the smallest possible demensions.

"Oh!" whispered Leezie, for such was the name of this interesting young woman, "I'm just broucht a sid[1] o' tea wi'

[1] Small quantity.

me, an' I wis just wantin' you ta luik in a cup fir me."

"O! Lord bliss dee," ejaculated Peggy, as her eyes gleamed with either the spirit of divination or love for the black double strong extract of the Chinaman's leaf. "Yea, I sall lüik in a cup fir dee; dat sall I, my bairn; an' Lord send dee as mony guid tøkens in it as I can wis dee." Saying this, Peggy hung the tea-kettle on the crook, and rinsing out the tea-pot, laid it on its side on the brand-iron, with it bottom towards the fire.[1]

"Eh! dear o' me, Leezie," continued she, "I'm failin' fast noo, an' sic a band o' deevils o' neeghbours aboot me; it's just killen' me; an' wir güidman is sic a saft düless boddie, he'll no open his mooth ta dem if dey wir pickin' da een oot o' his head. Sees du dis," showing her the plate with the butter which still bore the impress of Yacob's nose. "Dere's my pritty neeghbours! Dere's my profit! Dere's my yallow butter dat I aye got sic a name fir makin'. Dat's Sarah o' Northouse's wark. Dats what shü did dis mornin' wi gettin' a tinnie o' bland; but wir guidman is gaen ta get twa or tree hairs aff o' her coo da nicht, an' if I dunna get back my profit wi' dat, I'll sneck da limmer atween da een da first time I meet her; but da kettle is boilin' noo, an' I'll mask da sid o' tea, an' lit it stand till Yacob gengs to da ebb, fir he's just gaen in a peerie minnit."

Saying this, Peggy shook the tea from the paper which contained it into the teapot, which she placed on the hearth-stone opposite a nice opening between two half-consumed brands. When the masking process was considered complete, she took down a small cup and saucer from the rack, and filling the cup with the dark strong liquid, drank it off with great relish, giving a loud smack with her thin lips, and showing an extraordinary length of lever in the lower jaw, caused by the want of her teeth.

[1] See note I. Cup Divination.

Holding the empty cup now by the handle, she slowly drained off any remaining drop of liquid, and then proceeded to "cast" the cup. This consisted of giving it several professional taps on the palm of the left hand,—first the sides of the cup, then the bottom, and last the brim. This was to give fortune the opportunity of arranging the stalks and dots of the tea grounds into hieroglyphic pictures, which only the initiated could decipher. Then taking her spectacles from her pocket, and placing them on her nose, she held the cup out at full arm's length, exclaiming, "Eh! 'm—! my certie, der's sontin here. Dat's a bonnie cup. Yea, my dear bairn, doo hes a bonnie cup; an' may da Lord send de mony a blissen wi' it. Yea! yea! dere's a letter here just a peerie bit doon, an' den der's a ship wi' full sail; an' here's a man boddie standin' as if he just wanted ta speak ta dee. Dis man an' dee will come tagedder yet, tak du my wird for dat. An' here's a weddin' company, an' a bonnie company it is. Ay, du's gaen ta hae a lock o' bairns ta dis man, dat is du. Here der awa doon at the boddam o' da cup, puir tings, as if it wis a whilie ta dat time yet; but dere dey ir, luik du here," and Peggy pointed close to a group of black dots with her shrivelled forefinger, having a nail on it like a bird's claw; but though Leezie could not exactly see her future offspring amongst the tea grounds, the thought made her plump rosy cheeks blush deeper crimson, and she exclaimed, "Oh, Peggy, ye're makin' a füil o' me noo." "I!" rejoined Peggy; "na, na, my bairn, far be it fae me ta mak a füil o' dee. I'm just tellin' dee what I see, an' what I ken du'll see dy sell, if du's spared. Yea, and du's gaen ta hae plenty o' da warld. I didna notice dis afore, but here it is—horses, kye, sheep, and plenty o' a' thing. Eh! it is a bonnie cup indeed—a bonnie cup." "Weel, mony tanks ta you," said Leezie. "I'll just hae ta be gaen noo, as wir folk'll be winderin' whaur I am." "Oh, du's welcom, du's welcom, ta ony guid I can dü dee," rejoined Peggy; "an' Lord bliss dee for da sid o'

tea, fir it's revived me odiously.[1] Da wy dat Yacob is failed fae gaen ta da sea, an' the hens a' clockin', der's nae wy ta get a maskin' o tea unless da Lord sends it, as He's düne da day, praise be till His name."

"Weel, guid day be wi' you, den, Peggy," said Leezie, as a parting salutation on leaving the cottage.

"An' sae be wi' dee," responded Peggy, as she settled back in her well-padded chair, there to enjoy the soothing and exhilarating effects of the powerful extracts which she had earned as a reward for her soothsaying.

The reader's acquaintance with old Yacob, and more recently his wife Peggy, makes it necessary now to record some additional particulars regarding them.

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[1] Greatly.

CHAPTER VII.

My fause lover pu'd the rose,
But, ah! he's left the thorn wi' me.

BURNS.

OLD Yacob Yunson was at this time about sixty years of age, and hale and hearty for his years. He was a short, thick-set man, with a round florid face, thin whiskers, ample forehead, and intelligent expression of countenance. Quiet and docile, in his temper, he bore his wife's unconquerable and ceaseless "yatterin," as he called it, with more than Christian forbearance; and, with the exception of the poetical cure he attempted, as recorded in a former chapter, he never again tried the hopeless task of bringing her into subjection. They had been married for forty years, and their family consisted of an only son, who went to sea when he was eighteen years of age, but from whom they had heard no accounts for many long years. Old Yacob, as the reader has already had some means of judging, possessed a considerable amount of good common sense, quiet, pawky humour, and considerable power of observation in judging of men and things. His retentive memory had enabled him, during a long life, to acquire a complete knowledge of all the fairy tales, legends, and superstitions known in the islands; and he was so fond of telling these, that, as has already been seen, he could never resist the temptation which the hermit's tale so often put in his way of starting on his own account, when some particular incident in the hermit's narrative recalled a tale of a similar kind to his remembrance. Regarding old Peggy, the reader must have already drawn such a correct portrait of her in his own mind, that any further description must be unnecessary, except it be to mention a few immaterial points, such as—She was 5 feet 9

inches in height, slightly bent in the shoulders, wore two binders, and two "toys"[1] on her head, in the following order:—1st, A flannel binder; 2d, a flannel toy; 3d, a muslin toy; 4th, a black binder; and over all this a large thick handkerchief when out of doors. A blue "claith" petticoat reaching a little below her knee, and a "slug"[2] of the same material, fixed with a large pin in front, completed her attire.

When old Yacob returned from the ebb, he found the door of the cottage standing slightly ajar; and as he gently pushed it open, a strange kind of sound fell upon his ear. Listening attentively, he found it proceeded from the *but* end of the cottage, and that it had a striking resemblance to Peggy's voice.

Peering round the corner of the wooden bed, he saw a remarkable phenomenon—Peggy engaged in a musical performance. She was humming an old ballad, nodding her head, and beating time to the measure with her foot on the hearthstone. Old Yacob could not account for it, because he was equally ignorant of the fortune-telling business and of the exhilarating effects which the strong tea had produced on Peggy's susceptibilities, and which had thus caused "a time of singing to be heard in the land."

Fortunately, he had come just in nick of time to hear her commence the ballad a second time; and placing himself quietly at the head of the bed next the door, he stood there still till she had got to the end of it. It was

THE FAUSE KNIGHT.[3]

Knight Emir proved fause to his lady love,
Emiralo Mralandie;
An' she bore to him o' bonnie bairnies twa,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

[1] A hood or "mutch" of white muslin, without frills. [2] Short gown.

[3] This is an imitation of an old ballad which the author believes to be of Scottish origin; but his early recollection only retains the refrain and the affecting incidents of the death and burial of the innocents. He regrets that the want of original Shetland songs and ballads has in this, as in other cases, forced him to depend so much on his own resources.

She wrung her hands, an' she grat fu' sair,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
An' she tore out the locks o' her gowden hair,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

She's ta'en out a peerie penknife,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
An' she's ta'en awa the bonnie bairnie's life,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

She's lifted up a marrable stane,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
An' she's buried them there, a' by their lane,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

Here an' there she wandered awa,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
Makin' mane sair for her bairnies twa,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

Winter was past and simmer cam fair,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
An' the ladie sat doon wi' sair dool an' care,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

Bonnie birdies sang sweet sangs, I ween,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
An' twa bonnie bairnies played on the green,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

Bonnie bairnies twa, I wish ye were mine,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
My love for you never would tine,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

I would dress you in robes o' silk,
Emiralo Mralandie ;
And feed you wi' the forrow cow's milk,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

O ! mother cruel, once we were thine,
Emiralo Mrolandie ;
But by thy penknife our lives did tine,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

Now we are dressed in robes of white,
Emiralo Mralandie;
And have no need of the forrow cow's milk,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

Come away, mother, and join us there,
Emiralo Mralandie;
And leave a' your dool, and sorrow, and care,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

What news is ye tell to me,
Emiralo Mralandie?
A ladie found dead by a rowan tree,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

Lift her tentilly, she's cauld as snaw,
Emiralo Mralandie;
And lay her beside her bonnie bairnies twa,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

O! malison upon yon fause knight,
Emiralo Mralandie;
An' may he fa' in a bluidy fight,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

In the burdies' nests be locks o' his hair,
Emiralo Mralandie;
And the ravens pick a' his banes bare,
Doon by the green booth sidie.

"Eh dear O me!" sighed Peggy, as she finished the last stanza; "I'm forcin' a smile upo' da face o' affliction. Der's little singin' a my mind, though ance upon a day I wis light-hearted an' hallegirt[1] enough, bit lammit ye're, dat's awa noo." This soliloquy was rehearsed for old Yacob's edification (for she had just observed him emerge from his hiding-place), and it was intended to make him believe that the singing was purely accidental, and had no connection whatever with the exhilarating effects of strong tea. For, though she was prepared at any time to act on the offensive, and could bombard the patient

[1] Sprightly.

and enduring Yacob for hours, without any sense of fear or compunction, yet, upon the question of smuggled tea and cup-reading, she took great pains to dissemble and keep in the dark, and this for two reasons. First, that old Yacob had been instructed by the ruling elder of the district to report any case of cup-reading that came under his observation, in order that the offender might be admonished ; and second, the locker of the green chest contained certain well-kept, reek-stained coins, bearing a foreign image and superscription, which Peggy knew by experience could never be got into circulation in exchange for the "black leaf," if old Yacob knew of any contraband supplies of said article coming from other quarters.

The green chest was a fortress which all Mrs Yacob's engineering could never enable her to penetrate, nor could her heaviest artillery force the governor to surrender the key, or even let her peep within its walls ; she therefore had to make a virtue of necessity, and practically own submission before any supplies could be drawn from the military chest, and this took place only on very rare occasions ; for, as Yacob had been unable to increase his financial resources, he wisely demurred to reduce them, unless for very pressing and important reasons.

CHAPTER VIII.

But you and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low;
My paths are in the fields, I know,
And thine in undiscovered lands.—TENNYSON.

NEXT day old Yacob faithfully kept his appointment with the hermit, leaving Peggy still breathing threatenings and slaughter against Sarah o' Northouse for abstracting her butter profit, and against himself for not being more expert in obtaining the hair-charm from the said Sarah's cow; for in this important enterprise he had failed, owing to that wide-awake individual coming upon him just at the moment he was in the act of applying the shears to crummie's side.

As old Yacob lifted the wooden latch of the hermit's door, the latter rose to meet him, and, shaking him cordially by the hand, said, "How are you, my friend?"

"O brawly, brawly!" responded Yacob; "only we've hed a awful storm sin' I saw you last."

"Indeed," replied the hermit; "I did not hear it. Was it during the night?"

"Ay," said Yacob; "it wis baith last nicht an' dis mornin', an da dunder wis a' inside da hoose, an' no upo' da rüif like a norwast storm; lammit ye're, it's da auld wife I'm meanin; it's little a rivin' storm frichtens me whin my hoose is ta'en aboot, my screws fastied,[1] my boat i' da winter noust, wi' meal i' da barrel, and flesh i' da rüif. Bit da inside storm, Mr Ollason, is no sae weel tholed; though it doesna blaw your boat or your corn awa, it blaws awa what pits you mair aboot; an' dats your peace o' mind, your comfort, an' a da happiness your ain fireside micht gie you. Da auld wife tinks da neeghbours is geen aff wi' her profit, and I tink shüll set da toon in a lowe, if shü does na get it back again. You, dat's a man o'

[1] Corn stacks anchored with ropes and stones.

eddication, Mr Ollison, what is your opinion aboot witchcraft?"

"My friend," replied the hermit, "that is a subject my education can help me but little in, for one of the greatest abuses of learning is the attempt to explain the unexplainable. A true philosopher will become humble as he advances in knowledge; because just by his increase in knowledge he is able to measure his ignorance. The great field of the unknown is ever widening, as, step by step, he attains to the highest altitude of intellectual power; while, on the other hand, the self-conceited pigmy in mental growth rushes in where angels fear to tread, declaring that nothing exists in heaven or earth, but what is dreamed of in his philosophy. If in the material universe, where man has only matter to deal with, he is baffled in every step he takes beyond a certain limit, how much more must this be the case when the subject of his study is *spirit*, which his natural eyes cannot see, nor his natural faculties comprehend; for the natural cannot understand the supernatural.

"The sceptic may say he does not believe in the supernatural, because his natural senses do not perceive it. But a man born blind might as well say that the sun does not shine, because he does not see its light. The disbelief in his case arises from his incapacity to see; and is it not the incapacity of the human eye, as an organ constructed by the Creator to see natural objects, which prevents it from seeing the supernatural?

"When Elisha's servant saw his master and himself surrounded by a great host, he saw all that could be seen by his natural powers of vision; but when he saw horses and chariots of fire forming a bright and impenetrable cordon around them both, he saw with supernatural eyes; and so, if our eyes were at this moment endowed with such miraculous power, we should see the earth, air, and sea teeming with countless supernatural beings.

"Those beings, we have reason to believe, are representatives of the two great powers in the world—Good and Evil. If

man seeks the aid of the Good, he will obtain it; for he knows not how near unseen hands are to help him in trouble and temptation; and, on the other hand, if a man seek the aid of the agents of Evil, he will obtain such aid; and this is my explanation of witchcraft, and in this view of it there is nothing inconsistent with human reason.

"A man can only occupy two positions in this great question. If he says, 'I do not believe in the existence of anything but matter, nor of anything I cannot handle with my hands, and see with my eyes;' then I say to him, 'Account to me for the forms which matter has assumed in the material world around us. Dead matter cannot of itself move; it cannot by its own act mould itself into shapes of beauty, and adjust itself to fulfil wise and beneficent purposes. There must have been spirit exerting itself upon matter before this world, so full of varied beauty and wonderful adaption of means to an end, could come into existence as we now see it.'

"If on the other hand, a man says, 'I believe in the existence of spiritual power in the world, and also that the creation of the universe could not have taken place without such a power; but I do not believe in witchcraft, or any of those superstitions believed in by the ignorant; to such a man I say, 'My friend, if you admit the existence of spirit in any one of its manifestations, you admit all that I contend for; and your disbelief in what you are pleased to call superstition, so far from doing honour to your judgment, involves you in a contradiction which one of those unlearned persons you despise would have sagacity enough to see.

"Do you know the spiritual world so well that you can draw a line between what you call the possible and the impossible? or, when you speak of spiritual powers or spiritual beings, has the word "impossible" any meaning but such as your weak fancy gives it? If none of us knows what a spirit can do, how idle it is to attempt to square our beliefs with our

experience, when that experience really teaches us nothing regarding the nature of spiritual beings. Our experience gives us knowledge of what can be accomplished by natural means, and of what springs from natural causes ; and therefore all that is above Nature, and all that cannot possibly be accomplished by any of her known laws, must be attributable to supernatural power ; and nothing is more absurd or unphilosophical than for any man to attempt to limit the operation of a power which he does not understand. My belief in the existence of a spirit world gives me great comfort, and sustains me in my solitude, because I believe the object of my soul was torn from me by a supernatural power ; and that, although my natural eyes cannot see her, yet she may be very near me, and one day shall be restored to me. But more of this by-and-by. I am afraid I am wearying you with my philosophical arguments."

"Na, na ! no ye, Mr Ollison." said Yacob ; "though your subject is maybe just a kennan ower learned for da likes o' me ; yet I hae a kind a guid groff guess whaur ye ir, an' I'm shüre a' ye hae said is as soond as da Gospel ; but I'm wearyin' muckle for the rest o' your ain story. I tink ye left aff whaur you an' her wis sittin' doon i' da banks in a bonnie moonlicht nicht, lüikin at da mün, an' winderin aboot da starns."

"Yes," replied the hermit, "I left off there. Well, at Hallowmas I commenced my duties as a teacher, and, though too young for such an office, I endeavoured by close attention and a full knowledge of what I taught, to make up for what I wanted in years and experience ; and the result was, that I gave great satisfaction to all connected with the school ; and as time went on the number of my scholars increased as well as my income. I can truly say at this time I enjoyed unalloyed happiness. Esteemed by all who knew me, successful in everything I undertook, I would have been happy even in that enjoyment which the gratification of a noble ambition gives, but my highest source of happiness was the pure and ardent

affection I felt for my Lelah, and that soft sweet response which my love met with in her own bosom.

"She left the school about the same time as I did, as her father, though a well-to-do fisherman, could not afford to spare his children from work longer than they were able fairly to read, write, and count. When our attachment became known to the family (though we managed to conceal it for nearly two years from the time I first saw her), her parents seemed highly pleased, and I met with a cordial welcome whenever I choosed to call, which I did as often as I could make a reasonable excuse for doing so. When seated by the fireside on a winter evening, entertaining and astonishing the old man with my great stores of knowledge, how happy I felt to be so near my Lelah; and how can I describe her at this time when her ripened charms were just in the full glory of womanhood? Her merry laugh, so rich and full of the most exuberant mirth, was music in mine enraptured ear. How it thrilled my soul with a fulness of inexpressible delight! That voice, I hear it still; but, oh! is it possible that I shall hear it no more for ever? Oh God, why hast thou dealt with me thus? I can bear this no longer." And the hermit covered his face with his hands, and groaned in an agony of grief.

"Eh! laek o' me," exclaimed old Yacob, "I'm wae to see you, Mr Ollason, takin' on sae. Dünna distress yoursell dis wy; it bracks my heart to see you. Pit your trust i' the Lord; He can help you oot o' a' your troubles yet, an' mebbe bring her back ta you agen."

"Yes, I know He will," cried the hermit, quickly recovering himself, and dashing away the tears which his grief had wrung from him. "I know I shall yet behold her; but whether in mortal form, or as a bright spirit, I know not. I will wait patiently, and God's will be done. I thank you for your sympathy, my kind friend, and I will try and not again allow my feelings to overcome me so far.

"As I was telling you, my days and years during this happy period of my life glided on like a placid stream winding its way through a flowery land. Sunshine was ever on my path, and hope beckoned me on with fascinating smiles. I knew no care, and dreamed of no sorrow; but, alas! clouds and darkness were gathering on the horizon of the future, and the sunshine of my life was soon to fade in the valley of the shadow of death.

"My dear mother was suddenly taken from me, and her gentle voice was hushed in the silence of the grave before I could fully realize my loss. She was one of the most patient and gentle of her sex, and in her youth had been a woman of great beauty; and though years and sorrow had dimmed the lustre of her charms, they had also mellowed into greater beauty and loveliness the brighter ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, a loving heart, and a soul ennobled by a true and living faith. How well I do remember her, with her widow's cap, her soft gentle voice, her sweet kind looks, her words of tenderness and love, when listening to anything I had to tell her about my success at school, or of any other way in which I had distinguished myself. She studied all my wants with more than a mother's care, gliding noiselessly about the house, and doing a great deal with little apparent effort. So happy did she make home to me (for my aunt's house was indeed a home in every sense of the word), that I felt grieved and disappointed whenever I came home and found her not there to meet me.

"Her gentle and uncomplaining nature would not permit her to say she was ill so long as she was able to go about, for she always had such a delicacy of feeling and unwillingness to give trouble to any one; and thus a slow and insidious disease laid waste her frail constitution, and, like the cankerworm at the root of a tender plant, it was only when the last tendril was severed that she drooped and died.

"I had noticed some weeks before her last illness that her step was less elastic, and her movements less active than was

her wont; but though I saw this, I could not entertain the dreadful thought that she was really suffering from any serious ailment.

"It was autumn, and now just about six years since we had come to live with my aunt. I shall never forget that sad evening when I returned from the school—that evening whose lengthening shadows were gathering around me the gloom of my first sorrow.

"On entering the cottage, and missing my mother's loving welcome and her dearly-loved form, which my eyes always sought for, I eagerly inquired for her, when my aunt informed me she was in bed. I hurriedly approached her bedside, and said, 'Mother, why are you lying thus?'

"'Because I am ill, my dear," she answered in a soft whisper, and added, 'I fear, my dear boy, I shall never get better any more.'

"These words—the prophetic meaning of which I saw in the hectic flush of her cheek, and in that strange mysterious look of her countenance—made my heart sink within me. I grasped her hand, and bent over her, while the hot scalding tears fell thick and fast upon the snow-white coverlet.

"'O mother! say not so,' I cried, in a voice choked with emotion. 'You will get better; I am sure you will.'

"'O! no, my son,' she replied in a voice of surpassing tenderness, and with an expression of heavenly calm in her countenance. 'Death is no deceiver. He tells me that yonder sun, which now so sweetly sinks beneath the Wart, I shall never more behold. Open the window, love,' she added, 'and let in the cool evening air, that I may feel it; and draw the curtains aside, that I may see the fading light, for soon I shall see it no more; but a sun of brighter ray shall arise and light my path across the dark waters of Jordan; and then I shall be where there is no need of the light of the sun, or of the moon, for the Lamb who dwells in the midst of the throne is

the light thereof, and He shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.'

"'O! mother,' I again broke forth in an agony of tears; 'why will you speak so? How can I live without you? How can I come home, and not find you to welcome me? I cannot bear it! I cannot live if you are taken from me! O! let me run for a doctor; he can do something for you; I am sure he can.'

"'My son,' said she, in a solemn and impressive manner, and laying her hand gently upon my arm, 'you have always obeyed me, and you have been a brave and noble boy: it has been my happiness in life to see those qualities growing with your years; and surely as you love me, you will not grieve me now by disobeying me when I have most need of your love and obedience.'

"'O! mother,' I exclaimed, 'I will not disobey you; I will submit, and do whatever you wish me.'

"'Well, then, my dear son,' she replied, 'sit down calmly and listen to me, because I have something to say to you which will be of importance to you after I am gone. What I have now to tell you I might have told you years ago, but I wished to do nothing that could in any way decrease the influence of the great lesson of life you have learned so well, viz., the lesson of self-reliance; and I have therefore now no fear that any knowledge of the superior position in society which awaits you will change your principles, or tempt you to deviate from the path which it has been my highest earthly pleasure to see you walk in. Know, then, that you are the true and undisputed heir of your grand-father's property. It was made to you by will shortly after you were born; and this is the reason you were named Ollison, after your grandfather, and not your father's name, because this was your grand-father's wish, and we complied with it. I have long been aware of the attachment which has grown up between you and the dear child who is the object of your affections. She is worthy of you, and it is my hope that this attachment may continue until riper years

bring that happy union which you both look forward to. Then, and not till then, you must enter upon possession of your property. At present it is in good hands, and therefore put the knowledge of it from your thoughts, and follow the same course of self-culture and self-reliance which you have followed so closely all your life; but, above all, my dear son, she added solemnly, make celestial wisdom your early only choice. Follow the example of the meek and lowly Jesus, and seek to put your trust in that blood of atonement which He shed for the remission of sins, and then at last you shall be able to say, as I do now, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?"

"With those words she clasped her hands and looked up as if she saw bright angels hovering near, and waiting to carry her to the Celestial City. Then she gently closed her eyes, and in a whisper scarcely audible she breathed, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' I at once beckoned my aunt into the room, for I knew her gentle spirit was about to depart. At that moment a ray of light from the departing sun fell on her face, but she knew it not. A brighter light was dazzling her enraptured spirit with the effulgence of its glory, and shone through her countenance in an expression of heavenly beauty. Never before had I seen her look so lovely; for the moment I seemed to forget that she was dying—a few moments more, and one soft, long drawn sigh, a passing shadow over her calm and peaceful countenance, and all was still. She lay as if in a peaceful slumber. Life's battle was over, and her triumphant spirit was now soaring aloft on the wings of faith and love, to join the blessed throng of the redeemed around the throne on high, where there is joy for evermore, and where they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Sympathising neighbours were soon in the chamber of death, and friendly hands tenderly closed the eyes and composed the limbs for rest—rest to remain unbroken until the resurrection morn.

"Alas! for the uncertainty of life's fairest prospects. In one short week, how great a change! At the beginning of that week I was gliding down the stream of life in bright anticipation of the future, and putting the evil day far away; but ere that week run its course, the cold sod had closed over all that was mortal of my beloved mother. O how can I describe the sense of desolation which oppressed me!—now when her gentle voice could be heard no more, and her loved form no more seen when I returned home at evenings, and when I missed that joyous welcome which I had so long been accustomed to receive; but for my beloved Lelah, how cheerfully could I have resigned life, and all its concerns, and followed my dear mother to the tomb! but God has wisely ordered it so, that our sorrows shall yield to the gladdening influences of life, and that the dark shower shall be followed by the bright sunshine.

"Gradually the natural buoyancy of my spirits returned, and my Lelah became more than ever the sun and centre of my being.

"She mourned my loss with all the affection of a sister, and oft when we met alone by the sea-shore did she mingle her tears with mine whenever my departed mother happened to be the subject of conversation; but my friend," continued the hermit, as he wiped away the tears which were stealing down his cheek, "I am now near that part of my narrative which, like a thunder-cloud, appals my soul to enter upon, and pierces me anew with a thousand sorrows; yet it must be told, but not now. Let us pause and partake of some refreshment."

The hermit here paused, and wiped the cold perspiration from his brow. His blanched cheek and tremulous voice showed how deeply the recital of those affecting events of his life had stirred his keenly sensitive nature, and made him fear that if he proceeded further he should betray such great weakness as was not desirable for a stranger to witness.

Old Yacob was scarcely less affected. The hermit's

impressive manner, and the deep pathos with which he described some of the more touching scenes at his mother's deathbed, held the old man spellbound, nor did he once attempt to offer any comment of his own, which on other occasions he was so prone to do. He sat silent and motionless, with his hands resting on his knees, except now and then he raised his thumb to dash away an unwelcome tear, which hung glistening at the tip of his nose.

"Eh, Mr Ollison!" he exclaimed at last, "dere's no mony things in dis world dat could draw water fae da e'e o' auld Yacob o' Trosswick. On da keel o' a misforn[1] boat he's seen neeghbours an' relations torn ane by ane fae his side by da rush o' da wild green waves, bit his e'e wis dry, though his cheek wis wet wi' da saut spray dat lashed sairly in his face—but your bonnie dear midder, sae guid an' sae gentle, cut doon like a daisy afore a mawin' sye,[2] is mair den I can stand ta hear aboot. Ales! ales! it wisna my lot ta hae da like o' her ta sheer my life wi', but a roarin' liven' deevil dat wears da flesh aff my banes wi' her sharg, sharg, shargin', eenin', mornin', and midtime o' day, an' aye liven' an life tinkin', sae muckle as da warr."

"Well, my friend," replied the hermit, "we have all our trials, you see; and you must just bear yours with patience, as you see me bearing mine."

"Ay, ay, dats true, Mr Ollison," rejoined Yacob. "Bit ye see ye're a man o' eddication, an' I may say I just ken a B fae a bull's fit; besides, dere is naethin' in dis warl' sae ill ta stand as shargin'. Solomon says, 'It's better to live in a lumhead den wi' a brawlin' woman in a wide hoose;' an' puir Samson, though he cud kill a thoosan' men wi' da jaw-bane o' a ass, an' pu' doon hooses aboot da lugs o' da Phalistians, yet he hed na strent to stand da shargin o' a woman's tongue."

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[1] Castaway. [2] Scythe.

"You rightly interpret Scripture, my friend," replied the hermit; "but come and share my humble meal," he added, as he placed before the old man some dried fish and potatoes which had been cooked in a pot over the fire. The repast being finished, the hermit resumed his tale.

"Just about a year after the death of my dear mother," continued the hermit, "on a lovely moonlight evening, I met my Lelah at our favourite trysting place by the sea-shore. It was autumn, and the harvest moon was at the full, and cast her silvery light over the dark waters which lay beneath us, and stretched far to the eastern horizon. The stars twinkled softly in a cloudless firmament, and the gurgling waves sang a sweet lullaby at our feet.

"O, how beautiful my Lelah looked as the silvery light fell on her lovely countenance while we sat together on a fragment of rock! How my soul was charmed by the modest and timid glances of those eyes, so full of heavenly light and depth of love, as she listened to the outpourings of my heart, overflowing, as it was, with tender love.

"As the 'golden hours with angel wings' sped on, the moon rose high in the firmament, and showed that the hour had arrived when the sillick fishers would return from the cliffs, and when some of them might pass the spot where we were seated, she therefore suggested that we should return home; but I felt that time had fled too fast, and instinctively held the cup to my lips, and would not let it go, but which also I was then destined to drink of for the last time. I suggested that we should descend the declivity of the rock and rest at its base, listening to the murmuring waves and the faint cry of the 'peeweep' until the sillick fishers had all passed, when we could return home unobserved. To this she consented, and we descended to the foot of the rock, but had not been seated there many minutes when we heard a moaning sound proceed from one of the creeks about a hundred yards from the spot

where we rested. Supposing it to be a wounded seal (for sometimes those animals, after being slightly wounded by the sportsmen, escape, but afterwards crawl up on the rock to die), I asked Lelah to wait until I should ascertain the cause of this strange sound, which, I said to her, must proceed from a wounded seal. I kissed her, and tripped lightly over the shelving rock, hearing her voice calling after me, 'Take care of yourself, Olla, dear.' I entered the dark creek from which the moaning sounds proceeded, groping my way amongst the huge masses of detached rock, which had been piled up in wild confusion by the action of the waves, sometimes clambering over huge boulders, and sometimes creeping on my hands and knees through openings between the fallen masses. In forcing my way through one of these openings I felt myself suddenly seized by the feet from behind. I struggled to disengage myself, but could not. I then tried to force myself back, but the unseen hands, with irresistible force crushed my ankles, and forced me forward through the aperture. In vain I struggled with all the energy of despair, until the rock was covered with blood from my lacerated limbs. A faint cry, once or twice distinctly heard, and which I knew to be my Lelah's voice, made me struggle for freedom as the drowning man in the wild agony of death struggles to reach the floating wreck.

"Nature at last gave way, and I sank exhausted and unconscious; and oh! how often have I wished, since that awful hour, that the oblivion which then gathered around me had settled in eternal gloom, and that hated life had not brought back the horrors of unutterable anguish which awaited me; but God's will be done; I know not His dark inscrutable ways, but I know He can make light to shine out of darkness; and that as He shall one day command the obedient sea to give up the dead that are therein, so He shall at the appointed time command it to give me back the treasure of my soul.

"When I regained consciousness, the moon had long since passed the zenith, and the dark shadows of the overhanging cliffs cast themselves far over the silent waters. Like a bright angel surrounded by darkness, my Lelah in a vision stood before me, and in wild transports of joy I stretched out my arms to receive her, but the phantom eluded my grasp. I sprang to my feet, and in an agony of grief I cried, 'My Lelah! O where art thou? O my Lelah!' But the dark frowning cliffs only mocked me by echoing back her loved name. I rushed to the spot where I left her, but she was not there. I again called aloud on her name, but the reverberating rock mockingly answered my call. O God! how can I describe the anguish of that moment! I rushed to the verge of the rock, and stretched out my arms in eager anticipation of the yawning grave. I sought the friendly gurgling waves to quench the fire of my burning grief, but as I bent back for the fatal leap, a voice murmured in my ear 'hope,' and my strength forsook me, and I fell prostrate on the rock, and sweet oblivion again hid my sorrows under her dark mantle."

CHAPTER IX.

Better be with the dead,
Than on the torture of mind to lie
In restless ecstacy.
SHAKESPEARE.

"HUSHED whispers," continued the hermit, "fell upon my ear, and I faintly inquired, 'where am I?' when the well-known voice of my aunt softy answered, 'You are at home, Olla; but you are yet too weak to speak; be content to know that kind friends are around you, who will show you every kindness.'

"On the fatal night which saw the tragic events enacted which I have just related, my uncle and aunt, as well as Lelah's friends, became alarmed when she and I did not return at the usual time; and soon they, with the people from surrounding villages, flocked to the cliffs to seek us. Every creek and crevice was explored by the earnest and, in the case of Lelah's relatives, grief-stricken searchers, until at last I was found by two young men who descended the rock, stretched insensible where I had fallen; but my Lelah—O God, how can I say the word?—could not be found! Many of the searchers, after I was carried home, lingered about the cliffs till dawn; but alas! all in vain; no sound greeted their listening ears but the gurgling waves and the scream of the frightened shelder,[1] as it flew from its roost by the water's edge; and no sight met their straining eyes but the kitty wake[2] and the shag,[3] resting on the lofty edge of the rock. All concluded that Lelah Halcrow had

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[1] Oyster catcher (*H. ostralegus*).
[2] (*Larus tridactylus*).
[3] Cormorant (*P. graculus*).

perished by falling over the rock; but as no trace of her body was ever found, many doubts were afterwards entertained as to this being the correct view of the matter.

"My opinion was then what it ever has been since, viz., that the supernatural hands which took my Lelah from me also held me a captive under that rock until she was carried beyond my reach, and into the regions of the spirit world, which lie far down in the emerald caves of the mighty ocean."

"No a doot bit ye're richt, Mr Ollison," exclaimed old Yacob, unable longer to restrain his desire to record a tale of his own in corroboration of the hermit's opinion. "Nae bodie in der senses doots bit dat dere's a hantle mair i' da sea den we ken aboot; an' just as truly as der hill folk, tangies, and brownies upo' da land, sae hae dey der kith and kin in richt guid plenty i' da sea.

"Nae farder awa den my grandfeader's time, dere wis auld Sandy Bairnson o' Stottrigirt, a man dat a' bodie kent, ae morrin i' da grey licht, whin he wis gaen doon ta da sillicks, he cam upon a muckle grey silkey lien sleepin' i' da scurrick[1] o' da stane. Auld Sandy happened ta hae his sea tullie in da boddom o' his buddie, an' tinkin what a prize da skin o' da silkey wid be fir making wiscoats, bonnets, an' tobacco cashes, as weel as twa or tree can[2] o' gude üiley aff da blubber o' em, he clicks[3] oot da tullie, an' afore ye cud turn your heel whaur your tae stüd, he sticked da silkey anunder da left flipper. Da baste gae an awful groan, and jumped up wi' sic a splore, dat he twisted da blade o' da tullie oot o' da shaft, an' guid ower da face o' da stane in a bulder.[4] In coorse, Auld Sandy wis sair vexed at da loss o' da silkey, as weel as da blade o' his tullie; bit what cud he dü, dere wis nedder hide nor hair o' da baste ta be seen, except a sma' thing o' glettie[5] lumie, upo' da water, whaur he haed gaen doon, an' dis efter a peerie start

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1 Hollow.
2 A measure containing about a gallon.
3 Snatches quickly.
4 Boiling, fierce ebullition.
5 Oily.

made the sillicks begin ta bool[1] i' da scrüiff[2] o' da water. Bit dere's nae mair o' dis, till ae time dat Auld Sandy an' anidder man gengs awa ta Narrawa to buy a new boat, fir den a days a' da boats cam fae Narrawa[3]; dey wir biggit wi' timmer pins, bit efter dey cam hame dey were clinkit wi' seam an' rüove.[4] Da warst o' dey boats wis da misforn knotts dat wir in dem, an' Auld Sandy wis da best haand dat ever wis kent in Shetlan' fir finnin' oot dis knotts, an' naebody laeked ta bring hame a Narrawa boat till Sandy had seen her. Afore he dee'd he tell'd his son hoo he kent da meenin' o' dis knotts; an' dis wis it. Roond black knotts wis misforn knotts; dat wis, dat a boat wi' dis kind o' knotts in her wis shüre ta be cassen awa. Den dere wis windy knotts; dat wis knotts wi' sprains oot fae dem, an' dat shawed dat da boat wid aye hae da luck o' ill wadder. Den dere wis da richt kind o' knotts, dat wis lucky knotts, da shape o' ling, keillen,[5] or tusk; an' boats wi' dis kind aye haed luck ta get plenty o' fish. Bit as I wis sayin', Auld Sandy guid ta Narrawa ta buy a boat, an' whin he cam dere, he guid ta see da man dat biggit da boats; sae whin he comes in ta da man's hoose ta get some refreshment, he sees a auld man sittin' hurklin i' da chimley neuk, a kind o' cripple lüiken. Efter Sandy is sittin' doon a peerie start. da auld man turns roond aboot his head, and taks a guid lüik at Sandy, an' den he rakes his hand into a holl o' da wa', an' draws oot a auld rusty blade o' a tullie, an' says he ta Sandy, in his broken English—'Mine goot freen, me ask you eef ever you see dis sküan[6] before.' Sandy said, he thocht he sud a faan trow da eart, fir dere, as shüre as da Lord made him, wis da blade o' his ain tullie; an' sae, withoot sayin' a wird, ye may weel tink he wis blyde ta tak da door ower his head as fast as he cud.

"Den dere wis Auld Tammie Toughyarn, da sailor, a man

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1 To stir the calm surface of water, as fish do.
2 Surface.
3 See Note L. Trade with Norway.
4 Iron rivets.
5 Cod.
6 A knife.

The Hurkle Is a Happy Beast

dat wis ower a' pairts o' da warl, an' he tell'd dis ta Auld Ibbie Bartley, dat wis trids o' kin ta my wife's foster midder, an' her oey[1], young Lowrie Legaboot, tell'd me sae, it guid na farder atween, dat ae time da ship dat dis Auld Tammie wis in, wis lyin' at anchor some place far awa, upon a fine Sunday mornin', a merman cam abün da water, an' said dat he wid feel muckle obleeged if da captain wid shift his anchor juist a peerie bit ta ae side, as it wis fairly jammin up his door, an' his wife wid be over late fir da kirk. Noo, I tink dis mermaid—or sea-woman I tink it's mair proper ta ca' her—might set an example ta some dat mebbe tinks mair o' demsells. Hoo mony wid laek ta hae a ship's anchor jammed i' der door upon a Sunday mornin,' just as a gude excuse fir no gaen ta da kirk ava, whin a air o' licht smoor,[2] or saft flucker,[3] is enouch ta satisfee der conscience dat it's no kirk wadder; bit, Mr Ollison, I'm shüre I'm pitten you oot o' a' patience wi' dis auld failin' o' mines, dat I never can mak my tales sae short as dey ought ta be, whin idder folk is waitin' ta spaek. Bit noo geng on wi' your tale, I tink ye wir come ta da time whin ye wir lyin' in your aunt's hoose, just odious ill, an' nae bodie lippenin[4] life o' you."

"Yes," replied the hermit, "I had got to that point in my history; and to resume—When consciousness sufficiently returned to make me understand my loss, the shock proved too great for my enfeebled frame, and fever already burned in my wandering and tortured brain, and the lamp of life glimmered feebly in the socket. Alas! why did not its flickering light go out for ever, so that I might no more have awakened to the knowledge of life's bitterness? but it was to be otherwise, and I cannot penetrate the dark inscrutable purposes of God, nor know what He has in store for me. I will therefore wait patiently until, in His good time and way, He shall bring light out of darkness.

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[1] Nephew.
[2] Fog, drizzle.
[3] Snow falling in large flakes.
[4] Expecting.

"By the most affectionate care of my aunt, who nursed me with a mother's love, I was brought through the dreadful ordeal, and awakened once more to a knowledge of life's bitterness, and to find around me one dark and dreary waste howling wilderness, without one ray of light or hope to cheer the solitude of my life.

"On my health getting so far restored, an earnest wish was expressed by those interested in the school that I should resume my charge; but I found I could no longer mix with society nor follow its pursuits. I longed to turn my back upon the world, and seek in seclusion that solace for my grief and rest for my aching heart which mankind were incapable of giving.

"In this same cottage there lived an old man—a solitary over whose life hung a dark mystery—and to him I resolved to go. I visited the venerable hermit, and unbosomed to him my grief, and expressed a desire that he would permit me to share his humble abode, as the only retreat where life to me could be endurable. He listened patiently to all I said, and then replied,

"'My son, this is a befitting place for one like me, to whom the lengthened shadows of life show that the day is far spent, and that the night is at hand; but to thee, in whose ear the music of life ought to sound sweetly, and whose eye should be gladdened by the sunshine and flowers which brighten the path of youth, why shouldstt thou seek the life of a solitary, which can only embalm thy griefs instead of removing them?'

"Venerable father," I cried, "seek not to turn me from my purpose; my heart is cold and dead to life and its allurements, and it's only with you that I can bear it as a burden."

"'Well, my son,' the solitary said, 'seeing thou art so minded, welcome to share my humble abode and frugal meal; and I hope thou mayest learn something from old age, while the trials of thy youth teach me that at no period in man's pilgrimage to the tomb is he exempt from the sorrows of life.'

"For two years this venerable hermit was my only companion, and much I learned from his sage experience; but I never could draw from him the secret of his own life, nor the reason why he had become a solitary. After two years the old man died, and left me sole possessor of this cottage, and of the cultivated patches of ground which surround it.

"A blessed retreat it has been to me, because I have been near that dearest spot on earth, the last trysting place with my dearest Lelah,—that spot where we met for the last time, and where I joyously pressed her lips and heard her loving voice. It has been the holy sanctuary of the outpourings of a broken heart. Yea, with pilgrim's feet I have worn that rock smooth, and my tears, too, might have worn channels in its flinty bosom. And now, my friend, you know the story of my life, and your good and honest heart, I am sure, will do justice to my memory when I am gone. That you will bear witness to the truth, and shield my name from the unjust aspersions which have been cast upon it, is at least one drop of balm in the cup of bitterness which has been wrung out for me to drink alone."

The hermit here paused. The tension upon his overstrained feelings while describing those closing and touching scenes in what had passed of his eventful life, was too great for his sensitive nature, and he would have fallen from the settle on which he rested, had not old Yacob caught him in his arms.

"Oh dear, oh dear, Mr Ollison," exclaimed the old man as he supported the hermit, ye're just fairly dejasked,[1] an nae winder; it wid tak a harder hert den yours ta tell sic a woful tale, an' no brak doon afore da end o' it cam; bit trust in da Lord, Mr Ollison, though He hides His face fir a time, yet His compassion never fails, an' He hes promised dat da brüsed reed he will no brak; an' as He kens dat ye've been a brüsed an' broken reed, an' lang tossed upo' da billows o' life's ragin'

[1] Exhausted.

sea, sae will He bring you by-an'-by ta a haven o' rest, an' dat in a wy ye ken little o' at present. I'm a püir sinful craetur, an' kens little o' da wisdom o' dis world; bit I ken dis, dat da Lord is nae respecter o' persons, bit will hear da earnest prayer o' da simple an' unlearned, as weel as dem dats michty in da Scripturs; an' I earnestly pray dat her dat wis ta'en awa fae you may yet be restored ta you, and dat me or mine may in some wy or idder be da means o' bringin' dis aboot.

"I hed a draem no lang sin syne, an' a winderful draem it wis; an' although I dunna ken a' dat it means, yet I'm shüre o' dis, dat sontin is gaen ta happen near dis place, an' dat gude will come oot o' it baith ta you an' me."

"My heartfelt thanks, my dear friend!" exclaimed the hermit, who had now recovered himself, "for those precious words of friendship and comfort; and may God in His mercy grant that your good vision may be realised. I thank the Father of mercies that I am now able to say, 'Thy will be done,' whatever His dispensations may be towards me."

"Ay, dat's da kind o' speerit we a' ocht ta hae," cried old Yacob; "bit noo, I'm tinkin', I maun leave you, fir, as I tauld you, de're wis a storm wi' da auld wife da last time I wis up aside you, an' noo dis time I'm lükin fir a herrican, as I'm been a hantle[1] langer awa,—

"Bit da yatter an' da yowl o' a auld auld wife,
'll no soond doon i' da cauld grave dreary,
Nor da shrag an' cuttieshang[2] o' her weary weary strife,
Yacob's auld lugs, like tunner[3] winna hear aye.
His sair aekin' head shü'll nae mair deave,
When da bonnie cockieloories[4] grows on his grave.

"An noo, blissen be wi' you, Mr Ollison; an' may da praesence o' da Lord bide wi' you an' comfort you until, in

[1] Large quantity or space of time.
[2] Continued bickering.
[3] Thunder.
[4] Daisies.

His ain gude time an' wy, He brings you oot o' a' your trouble."

"Farewell, my good friend," exclaimed the hermit, as he pressed Old Yacob's hand with feelings of fervent friendship; for he felt that the burden of his griefs had been greatly lightened by the genuine sympathy and true friendship of this old man. Thus parted those two friends, Old Yacob pursuing his way towards his cottage, and the hermit retiring to his lonely fireside, where he sat for many hours lost in thought, and gazing at the half-consumed peat brands which lay on the hearth, and formed themselves by the help of his fertile imagination, into many strange fantastic shapes.

One remarkable appearance chiefly attracted his attention. This was a half-consumed brand which had a most striking resemblence to the hull of a ship surrounded by foaming surf, the latter being well represented by the whirling snow-white ashes which lay on the hearth. Just as the hermit was musing on this singular illustration of what scientific men call Pyromancy,[1] another brand fell down and disclosed two smaller ones behind it, and nearer the centre of the fire. These resembled a man and a woman, the former clasping or bearing the latter in his arms, and from the top of each issued a flickering flame, which by interpretation, meant joy or laughter. Although "reading out of the fire," as it was called, as well as cup reading, was not new to the hermit, yet he knew so little of those arts, or believed so little in their pretensions, that those singular appearances produced little other effect on his mind at the time than that of a passing fancy; but when read in the light of the remarkable events which so shortly afterwards followed, he felt the force of the saying, that coming events cast their shadows before; and he was also taught this important lesson, that we should be very slow to condemn the opinions and beliefs of others, merely because they differ from our own.

[1] See Note. Pyromancy.

CHAPTER X.

Some merry friendly country folks
Together did convene,
To burn their nits and pu' their stocks
And haud their Halloween.

BURNS.

IT is night, and the moon has not yet risen, but in the hollow of Trosswick Vale are seen faint glimmering lights marking the site of the village of Trosswick. About three hundred yards from the village, and on the southern slope of the Ness, is seen one solitary light; this proceeds from a single pane of glass in the roof of Widow Harper's cottage, which is lighted inside by a blazing peat-fire and by the "collie" which hangs suspended from the centre of the "rape." Writers of novels would say that if the lonely inmate of this humble dwelling ever smiled, it was through her weeds and tears like the sun in a mist; but as this is a true history and not a novel, the truth must be told, that "Bawby o' Brigstanes"[1] was a hale, hearty, buxom, middle-aged widow, "as canty as a kittlin," and one of the most expert match-makers that ever did honour to the trade.

According to the fashion of the time, Bawby married when very young, but her experience of matrimony proved sufficiently short to enable her to bear the loss of a venerable husband, without any dangerous consequeuces to the organ of her affections.

Old Hyndie Harper o' Helliklees thought that May and December might be better together than separate, and therefore he said, "Bawby, will du tak me?" and she said in reply, "Yea, dat will I, Hyndie;" and so the knot was duly tied. But old

[1] See Note. Bawby o' Brigstanes.

Hyndie, by sage experience and mature years, had come to the conclusion that the increase of the population was being sufficiently well attended to by those to whom the fancies or follies of youth could make such matters attractive, and therefore he more wisely left his not inconsolable helpmate without any kind of incumbrance, unless his old sea boots and "skinjup," which nobody would take as a present, could be reckoned under that head. Bawby o' Brigstanes, however, was a widow, and as such she decently put on a black binder over her white starched mutch. But here the principle of contrast interposed, and Bawby's smiles and simpers looked all the brighter for that, just as a belt of black cloud over the rising sun makes that luminary look all the more gorgeous. As time went on, Bawby set her cap for most of the candidates for matrimony in the parish; but some way or other nothing ever came of it; and as gossips generally have the bump of Causality largely developed, so it was discovered by the aid of this phrenological protuberance, that Bawby's over-sanguine temperament prevented her from waiting until the tree of love should grow like any other plant, and that in her laudable endeavours to force its growth after the manner of Jonah's gourd, it always shared the unhappy fate of that renowned vegetable.

Disappointments are, however, often blessings in disguise, alike to individuals and communities; and so it proved in the history of the parish in which Bawby's usefulness was to be made known. Disappointment did not make her a misanthrope, but the very reserve; it made her a philanthropist, doing all, and more than ever, the golden rule required. She set before her the noble task of conferring those benefits and pleasures upon mankind which she could not experience herself. She established a regular matrimonial agency office, consisting of a News Department, embracing general gossip and the latest matrimonial intelligence; and an Assignation Department, where introductions and love engagements were

carefully and punctually attended to. After a short time she added another department for Cup Reading, the importance and urgent necessity of which soon were made manifest, as matrimonial inquirers felt even more necessity to know something of the future than the past.

In all the departments no regular fees were charged, but small gratuities were not refused. Such as "a nicht's kitchen o' pork,"[1] a "cashie o' tatties," "a truncher[2] o' meal in a napkin, wi' a makin' o' tae in ane o' da corners," a "puckle o' oo'[3] when da sheep wis rued," and pieces of "tattie grund" here and there through the parish: the latter she generally obtained for "dellin'[4] a day in voar;"[5] and as the young folks in the families she assisted in this way were ever ready to help her in working the piece of ground set apart for her, she could always command a good stock of potatoes for winter; and, besides, by thus mixing with various families, she laid in a stock of general gossip and matrimonial knowledge, even more valuable than any vegetable product. She always kept two or three lambs or sheep over the winter, whose comfortable quarters were provided in the outer end of the cottage, and though she had neither hay nor cabbage of her own, the animals were nevertheless always in good condition; but this, like many other puzzles, only requires to be explained, and the explanation is, that "Auld Halloween" and taking in the sheep from the fields occurred generally about the same time, and most of the lads in the parish seemed to have been born in the world with a ruling passion for throwing cabbage-stocks down Bawby o' Brigstanes' "lum" on Halloween night; and as evidence of this, the accumulation of that vegetable on the night in question turned out to form a very fair winter stock of

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1 As much pork or beef as serve one meal.
2 Plate.
3 Pulling the fleece from the sheep's back just when about to fall off.
4 Delving.
5 Seed-time.

provender for the four-footed inmates of Bawby's cottage. What particular yard the cabbages came from was a useless question for her to ask, even if she had desired any knowledge of the subject: but this was a field of inquiry she felt no inclination to enter upon; and she therefore contented herself with the reflection that "it was just the boys' fun, püir tings," though it is not unlikely that the owners of the cabbages, when they missed them next morning, might have been so obtuse as not to see the matter exactly in that light.

It is Halloween, and numerous lanterns and fire brands, with tails of streaming sparks moving in the dark like planets, seeking the centre of a new system, are seen seeking that well-known centre of attraction—Bawby o' Brigstanes' cottage. Lads and lasses, fully a score, all in holiday attire as they arrive, take their seats on the long settle by the fireside, or on high-backed wooden chairs, "creepy stools," or any other kind of seat which Bawby, radiant with smiles and kind welcomes, can find for them.

"Ay, dere's himsell noo; come awa, come awa," exclaims Bawby, in her most inviting tones, as Johnnie o' Greentaft steps in over the floor in his thick soled clogs, white duck trousers, and blue jacket, and puts out his lantern, which he places on a chest-lid where others were already standing. "Yea, yea, we ken what's brocht dee a' dis rod da nicht; no ta see Auld Bawby, I'se warren; na, na, somebodie ell's—ahem;" and Bawby smiled and winked, and looked across the fire to "bonnie Annie Leslie," as the lads called her, who was sitting on the settle blushing like a rose, and knitting with nervous activity.

"I sall pluck a craw wi' you fir yon yet, Bawby," said Annie, in a soft tremulous voice as she glanced from her knitting-wires to Bawby, and then at the new comer, who was taking his seat on the only vacant chair in the cottage.

"My bairn!" exclaimed Bawby! "I'm shüre I said naethin; ye a' herd dat I mentioned nae names; sae haud du

dy tongue, my dear bairn; mony a ane wid be blyde ta get da glisk o' a ee fae Greentaft cassin der wy," and Bawby gave a heavy nudge at Johnnie's knee, whose chair happened to be next to hers.

"Ay, ay, we understand you, Bawby," said Johnnie, whose equilibrium had been greatly upset by the blushing charms of his sweetheart on the opposite side of the fire-place, and to relieve his embarrassment was swinging his chair on its hind legs in such a perilous way as might have placed the centre of gravity on the wrong side.

Annie Leslie was acknowledged by all the lads "aneth da Wart Hill" to be "da bonniest lass dat cam in da kirk door;" and therefore, as might have been expected, she had no want of admirers; but as she could only bestow the favour of her heart and hand upon one of them, the gift she wisely reserved for Johnnie o' Greentaft; and no one better deserved it, as he was a well behaved and handsome lad, and as ardent a lover as ever felt Cupid's magic influence, or the pain of his dart when shot from two bright eyes.

"Du düsna mean ta say dat du's brocht a bate we dee da nicht," said Johnnie, as he settled his chair down on its four legs, and seized hold of a bundle of dried bent which Robie Ridland had placed under his limb, and commenced to wind into simmits.

"I ken deil snüid dü sall wind here dis nicht. Dere—just lit da lambs ate hir," said he, as he pitched da "bate" to the outer end of the house. "Boy, du's mad," said Robie, as he looked after his bate to see where it fell. "I may as weel wind a bit simmit as dü naethin, shürly."

"Dü naethin! an' be blowed ta dee," echoed Johnnie; "kiss da lasses, man, if du has naethin else ta dü; dats mair like Halloween's wark, shürly."

"Weel den, boy. I'll begin wi' dy ane first," responded Robie.

"If du's man fir it, I'll no hinder dee," said Johnnie, as Annie looked at him with a reproachful, timid glance, while her fingers moved faster at her knitting than ever. "Bit I'll no dü it, du sees," rejoined Robbie; "I hae mair laekin' for Annie den ta toozle her bonnie new net mutch because du bids me dü it."

"Yea, Lord bliss de, du aye hes some sense," said Annie smiling, "bit he hes nane. Haud du dy tongue, Robbie; I sall dance at dy weddin' fir yon yet."

"Noo, Bawby, what's ta be da ploy?" said Rasme o' Raunshikbraes; "ye ken sae weel aboot it, dat we'll just lit you steer da boat, an' we'll row or sail wi' da wind, just as ye blaw it."

"Eh! my bairns," said Bawby, "I'm shüre, what wid ye dü without me? Ah, weel, I tink every ane sud tell a story or sing a sang, an' den efter dat ye can try your fortins an' some fun laek dat, an' hae it a' by afore da boys begins wi' der stocks. Shame fa' dem fir da dirt it maks aboot da fireside; bit hit min just be borne wi'; ye ken bairns will be bairns, an' I never cud hae da hert athin me ta idder rin efter dem or flyte wi' dem fir castin' twa or tree peegs o' kail in trow my lum on a nicht laek dis."

"Weel, Bawby," said Rasme, "da sun rises i' da aest, an' just whaur your shair is staandin', sae ye'll better begin, and dat'll set a gude hert in us a', and sae lit wis hae your sang ta begin wi."

"I, I!" exclaimed Bawby, "my dear bairns, my time o' singin' is by; anes upon a day I cud a sung as well as some dat tocht mair o' demsells; bit lammit, dat's a' by an' geen, an' sae sing ye dat can sing; an' Lord grant dat ye may lang sing wi' a licht hert."

"O Bawby, haud your tongue," exclaimed Rasme; "ye can sing better yet den ony o' us. I widna gie you yet for da half o' da young lasses; an' I'm shüre ye're as young luikin

yet as da maist o' dem. Why, a bodie widna tink ye wir muckle ower twinty."

"O geng awa wi' dee, boy," cried Bawby, throwing her hand towards Rasme, and her cheeks blushing with delight as she drank in his well-timed flattery. "Weel I'm shüre, what can I sing?" she added after a pause, and then began to sing in a shrill quivering voice, the ballad of 'Annie and Johnnie o' the Glen'—

THE BALLAD.

What bonnie, bonnie lad is yon sae trig an' braw
Dat's comin' trippin' ower da Vadle[1] Tree, O?
It's Johnnie o' da Glen, wi' his crew o' fishermen,
Come ashore wi' locks o' fish fae da sea-e-, O.

What bonnie, bonnie lass is yon sae trig an' braw,
Dat's comin', comin' hame wi' da kie, O?
It's Annie o' da Dale, bit her cheeks is growin' pale,
An' her apron string it winna, winna tie, O.

O sair, sair shü greets, an' sits by her lane,
An' tinks on braw Johnnie o' da Glen, O;
An' da promises he made his bonnie bride ta wed,
An' tak' her to his ain but an' ben, O.

What bonnie, bonnie lass is yon sae dow an' wae,
Dat's wanderin', wanderin' weary by da shore, O?
It's Annie o' da Dale, wi' her cheeks sae wan an' pale,
Seekin' rest aneth da waves fae her sorrow, O.

What bonnie, bonnie lad is yon sae trig an' braw,
Dat's comin' rinnin fast ower da lea, O?
It's Johnnie o' da Glen, left his boat an' fishermen,
For dey manna see da tear dat's in his e'e, O.

What twa lovers true is yon wi' kisses sweet,
In ane anidder's airms greetin' sairly, O?
It's Johnnie o' da Glen, an' sweet Annie o' da Dale,
Wi' love ta ane anidder clingin' dearly, O.

What bonnie, bonnie bride, weel buskit an' braw,

[1] A bridge formed by a single log spanning a burn which runs from the Loch of Spiggie, near Fitful Head, to the sea.

What bridegroom sae gallant an' sae gay, O?
It's Johnnie o' da Glen, an' sweet Annie o' da Dale,
Airm an' airm on der ain weddin' day, O.'

"Noo, bairns, dat's sürely my pairt," said Bawby. "Gude kens if it hedna been til a pleased you, no a cheep wid a come oot o' my head dis nicht. But noo whaa's neist? Oh, it's dee, Johnnie, my bairn; no a better haand i' da hoose; sae come awa wi' dy sang."

"O Bawby," said Johnnie o' Greentaft, "I'm shüre ye ken I can sing nane; but I'll ge you a bit o' a auld rime dat'll sair my turn. I tink it's ca'd da 'Mirry Fiddler,' an' dis is it, if I can sing it:—

'I am a fiddler ta my trade,
An a' da world weel knows it,
I screw my pins an' plink my strings,
An' rub my bow wi' roset.
As I go fiddlin', fiddlin', fiddlin',
As I go fiddlin' ferrie, O?
I'll fiddle until my fiddle an' I
Baith gengs tapsill teerie, O.

An' den whene'er I draw my bow,
Up quick da lads gets jumpin':
Dey wheel da lasses on da flür,
An' fast dey a' geng thumpin'.
As I go fiddlin', &c.

A pig[1] o' gin close at my side
Aye keeps my bow in motion,
An' springs mair sprichtly geng as I
Get half across da ocean.
As I go fiddlin', &c.

A dram wi' ivery reel I tak,
An' still der's na confusion
Inta my head, until my pig
Is brought to a conclusion.
As I go fiddlin', &c.

An' den I screw my pegs a' doon,

[1] Jar.

An' plink my strings mair slowly,
Becase da drappie in my ee
Maks rims aboot da collie.[1]
As I go fiddlin', &c.

My fiddle den gengs in her case
(Tree first strings needs restorin'),
But "Bass" goes on wi' steady dron
As lang as I can keep snorin'.
An' nae mair fiddlin', &c.

NEXT MORNING.

When I arise and ope my eyes,
I find I have been deep in—
My banes are sore, as da kill door,[2]
Is nae saft bed to sleep in,
Efter my fiddlin', &c.'

"Noo, I hoop dat will please you," said Johnnie, as he finished his song, and lighted his pipe with a live coal held in the tongs.

"Yea dat will it," said Bawby; "if ivery ane düs as weel dey'll dü. Noo, Lowrie, it's dy turn."

"O dear, a dear! what sall I dü?" said Lowrie o' Lingigart, with an affected sigh. "I can sing nane; an' as fir tales, gude kens my stock o' dem is bit sma'; bit ye maun just tak da will fir da deed, an' I'll dü da best dat I can; an' sae, if ye laek, I'll tell you a hill-folk's story, an' no a wird o' a lee in it, for my midder kent da folk as weel as shü kent her ain fedder and midder.

"Dey ca'd da man Robbie Ruttle, an' da wife Sissie Sandison, an' dey bedd upo' da Grund o' Brew, an' hed a family o' bairns, an' a lock o' kie, sheep an' horses, an' wir winderful weel aff. Bit the wife fell ill, an' efter a while shü deid ta a' appearance, and wis streeked an' kisted just laek ony idder dead boddie; bit whin da men dat wis at da fooneral

[1] A ring or circular haze, such as a person with inflamed eyes sees around a light.
[2] Elevated steps in the entrance to the kiln, where the fiddler usually sits when there is dancing in the barn.

lifted da dust[1] dey said ta ane anidder dat da coffin wis winderful licht, da sam is if dere wis naethin' in it ava, altho' dey niver tocht o' onything bein' wrang, till da news cam oot efter dat.

"Da nicht efter shü wis buried, da man dreamed dat shü cam til him, an' shü says, says shü, 'O Robbie, Robbie, I'm no happy, fir I'm taen awa wi' da hill-folk, an' I want dee ta tak me back agen; sae geng du,' says shü, 'da morn's mornin' wi' da first taws o' daylicht ta da muckle stane o' Stilligart, an' staand dere a peerie while, and den draw a ring roond aboot dee an' say,

'Oot side da ring your power may yet tine,
In side da ring Lord keep me an mine.'

Bit Robbie was a kind o' oorie bodie a' his days, an' tho' he dreamed da sam dream ower an' ower agen for monts, he niver hed da corage ta geng ta da grey-stane, as he wis tauld.

"Da morn efter shü deid wis a heavy faa o' snaw upo' da grund, an' some man bodie gaen up ta da hill ta lüik efter sheep noticed a great lock o' prints o' sma' feet laek bairns' feet in da snaw a' da wy up fae Robbie's hoose alang da yard deck, an' up ta da hill; an' aye here an' dere whaur the prints o' da feet wis, a' da wy up da rod da snaw wis marked wi' draps o' bluid."

"O Lord save dee, Lowrie, an' haud dy tongue noo!" exclaimed Girzzie of Glufftoon, as she let her hands and knitting fall on her lap, "du's makin' me dat oorie dat I'll never be fit ta lave dis hoose da nicht. Oh my Lord, what's yon!" she again exclaimed, as she sprung from her seat, and fled across the fire, seizing Bawby around the neck, and looking behind her with terror depicted in her countenance. "Is du mad, Girzzie;" roared Johnnie o' Greentaft, "sees du no dat it wis just da cat dat wis ununder dy shair?"

"O mercy, what a gluff I got!" sighed Girzzie, as she stepped across the hearth, and resumed her seat.

[1] A term applied to a corpse.

CHAPTER XI.

Wi' merry sangs and friendly cracks,
I wat they didna weary;
And unco tales, and funny jokes,
Their sports were cheap and cheery.
BURNS.

"Noo, Lowrie," said Bawby o' Brigstanes, nodding her head towards Lowrie o' Lingigart, "geng on wi' dy story, an' ill trift be ta her füil face dat pat dee aff o't."

"Weel," resumed Lowrie, "da neist winderful thing dat happened aboot da hoose wis da wife's claes. Whin shü deid her claes wis a' pairted; da eldest dochter got some, an' her sisters got some, an' a auld aunt got sae muckle; bit ae mornin' whin dey wauken'd a' da claes wis amissin', an' dey tocht dat da claes hed been stown, but wha da tief cud be nae-body kent; an' da winderful thing wis dat da claes wis stown oot o' every ane o' da houses da sam nicht. Bit dere's nae mair o' dis till ae day dat da eldest dochter happened ta lift da lid o' da midder's kist, whin, da Lord preserve a', wisna every stick[1] o' da claes lyin' faulded as neat as da haand o' man cud dü it.

"Den dey hed a coo dat da wife got fae her ain midder, an' efter shü (dat's Robbie's wife dat wis taen awa, I mean) efter shü died dis coo wis shifted fae da baand dat shü wis tied wi' til anidder baand, bit in da mornin' da kie wis fund shifted, an' hir coo tied in her ain baand; an' dis happened ower an' ower agen, till dey didna shift her ony mair. Every nicht dere wis some disturbunce aboot da hoose, an' da things a' shifted fae da wy dey wir left whin the folk guid ta bed. Da lame[2] wid be taen oot o' da rack an' set upo' da table, an' da fire kindled, an' da tae pot standin' upo' da hertstane, as if some-

[1] Stitch. [2] Crockery.

body wis gaen ta mak tae. Ae time da muckle kettle wis fun i' da mornin' staandin' atween da doors half fu' o' bluid an'——"

"Noo, Lowrie," again exclaimed Girzzie o' Glufftoon, "if du says anidder wird, du'll pit me oot o' my judgment."

"Weel trath, Girzzie," said Lowrie, "I tink du hes na far ta geng, bit I'm düne noo; an' sae just settle dee doon, an' mak dy sock fir supper time, an' den if du's feared ta geng hame, I'll rape dee athin a büddie, an' tak dee hame upo' my back."

"I'm shüre du's no able," said Girzzie; "du'll eat seven saut barrels yet afore du's able to carry me fae here ta Glufftoon."

"Weel," responded Lowrie, "I'll waager dee dis ane" (taking hold of his ear), "dat I'll tak dee upo' da tap o' a büddie o' meal, an' carry dee fae here ta da yard deck o' Glufftoon."

"Weel, weel!" interposed Bawby, "du'll hae ta geng ta da mill fir da büddie o' meal first, Lowrie; an' whin du comes up wi' her, I ken du'll gie Bawby a güid plate fu' oot o' her first, an' du'll be weel blyde du did dat afore du gets ta Glufftoon wi' Girzzie upo' da tap o' her; bit feenish dy story first, my bairn."

"O, I'm just dune, Bawby," continued Robbie, "except dis, dat Robbie never hed da corage ta dü as he wis tell'd in his draems; an' I canna help ca'in him a simple, coordly snüil, fir if it hed a been me, I wid a geen an' met her, altho' da ert hed been swarmin' wi' hill-folk, as tick is ever I'm seen da rabbits i' da links in a münlicht nicht; but whaa's neist, Bawby? I tink I'm düne my pairt."

"I'm shüre du's düne dat, my bairn," said Bawby; "an' noo it's dy turn, Willie. I ken du hes tales enoch if du laeks ta tell dem; sae come awa, my dear bairn."

"I! I!" exclaimed Willie Bigiltie o' Broonknowes, "I'm shüre I kenno what ta tell you, unless it be annider hill-folk's story, or I'll tell you twa or tree short anes ta mak up fir

Lowrie's lang ane. Weel, den, dere wis ae time dat dere wis a lock o' hill-folk dat cam inta a hoose upo' da nicht, an' ane o' da hill-folk's wives büor a bairn, an' whin dey luiked aboot da hoose fir water ta wash da bairn in, dey cud fin' nane, except some blaand in a kirn; sae dey tüik some o' dis blaand and washed da bairn wi', and den dey tümed it back agen in da kirn, and said, 'Dat'll learn you a lesson da neist time ye geng ta bed an' no lave water i' your hoose;' sae fae dat day ta dis, naebody iver wis kent ta geng ta bed an' no lave water i' da hoose ower da nicht.

"Anidder story, an' a true ane, fir my midder kent da man as weel as shü kent her ain fedder. Da first nicht dat he güid ta see his lass, just as he left his ain folk's hoose, an' güid doon by da peat stack, a great company o' hill-folk cam doon fae da idder side o' da stack, an' followed him a' da wy ta da hoose whaur da lass bedd;[1] bit afore dey cam dere, dey hed ta cross a burn, an' he said, 'Lord save him,' as he heard da plash o' der feet i' da water as dey cam efter him just as veevilly[2] as he heard himsell speakin whin he wis tellin da story. Whin he cam ta da hoose, dey güid up alang da tae side o' da stack, an' he güid up alang da tidder, an' whin he cam oot a' da hoose ta geng hame agen, dey met him at da fit o' da stack, an' followed him fit for fit until he cam till his ane peatstack, whin he saw nae mair o' dem; bit he never güid back again ta da sam lass, fir he tocht it wis a ill sign."

"Dud he ever say what leak dey wir?" inquired Bawby; "whin dey followed him a' dat gate he cudna bit see veevily enouch da potridge[3] o' dem."

"Weel, he said dey wir just laek bairns tree or four year auld, bit winderful sma' an' pirjink aboot da legs, an' a' clead in green claes, just neepid[4] inta da skin, an' den upo' der heads dey wüor capes o' da sam colour, heich

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[1] Resided.
[2] Clearly.
[3] Portrait.
[4] Pinched, narrow.

an' dwimishin[1] awa ta a sma trointie[2] at da tap like a flossiecape,[3] or like Auld Midder Hubbard's hat in da peerie pictur books. Dey wir awfully soople, an' whin dey danced it wis just like as mony wind baa's jimpin' fae da ert. Dey whirled, an' cleekit, and jinket sae lichtly, it wis a graand sicht ta see dem wi' a bricht münlicht nicht. Auld Eddie Edemson o' Ootvoe wis as weel acquanted wi' dem as he wis wi' his ain folk, an' great companies o' dem wid a followed him at nicht ony wy dat he güid; an' whin he met onybody an' wanted da hill-folk ta lave him at wance, he wid a just strucken his staff ipa da ert, an' said--

'Skeet howe hame, *güid* folk!'

an' whin he said dis every ane vanished in a meenit. Bit whin he wanted dem ta geng hame at their leasir he hed a kind o' rime dat he said, an' as he keepit sayin' it dey slowly vanished awa; an' dis wis da rime—

'Da twal, da twal apostles,
Da elevan, da elevan evengilists,
Da ten, da ten commanders,
Da nine da brazen sheeners,
Da eicht da holy waters,
Da seven starns i' da heavens,
Da six creation mornins,
Da five da tumblers o' my bools,
Da four da gospel makers,
Da tree triddle trivers,
Da twa lily-white boys dat clothed demsells in green, boys;
Da ane, da ane, dat walks alon, an' now ye a' geng hame, boys.'

"Da hill-folks wis gude enouch whin ye pleased dem, an' ca'd dem '*guid folk*,' an' no hill-folk, fir dey never laeked dat; bit when dey wir ill-pleased dey wir very vicious, an' da warst was takin' awa kie and sometimes bairns, an' auld folk as weel. A'body kent dat Eric Yunson hed a bairn dat wis taen awa; it just began an' wüor up, an' wüor up, till it wis a perfect veesion; an' somebody gae dem coonsel ta swüp it oot among da

[1] Tapering. [2] End or snout. [3] Cap made of rushes.

ase just i' da first dim-rivin', an' den keep da door open, an' watch fir dey saw a bairn comin' in, when dey wir ta draw a ring roond aboot it an' say :—

> 'Ootside da ring your power may ye tine,
> Inside da ring, Lord, keep me an' mine.'

Sae dey did as dey wir tauld, an' ae morning' just i' da first dim-rivin' dey swüped dis eemage oot among da ase, an' oot trow da door, and den dey waited a peerie start, an' in comes a beautiful bairn wi' yallow curlin' hair, an' just da very face o' what der ain bairn sud a been ; an' sae, as ye may tink dey wirna lang in sayin' da wirds ; bit in a meenit do hoose wis filled wi' a kind o' wind dat blew everything aboot da hoose ; an' dis was da hill-folk, whin dey cudna get inside da ring, dey blew der breaths upo' da bairn an' da folk : an da niest mornin' der skins wir a' blistered, but efter a while dat a' wür awa, an' da bairn grew up ta be a fine luikin' woman. Bit it's noo time ta me ta be düne, I tink ; an' sae wha's neist, Bawby? I'ts you dat luiks efter dat."

"Yea, I sall luik efter you a', my bairns," said Bawby ; "bit I'm tinkin' it's just my ain Leezie dat's sittin' at dy side dat's gaen ta gie wis a sang noo."

"O, Bawby, ye micht pass me," said Leezie Lowrie o' Langgate, "for I never ken what ta sing."

"Dat's just because du hes sae mony o' dem, my bairn," replied Bawby ; "bit du can gie wis 'Willie da Sailor ;' dat's a bonnie sang, an' we'll a' be blyde ta hear it."

"O, dat ane," said Leezie, smiling ; "I'm shüre I never ken if I mind it a' ; bit if I miss ony o' da verses ye can tell me." And Leezie sang in a soft clear voice this ballad :—

> 'It was in the month of fair July
> When wild flowers bloom most pleasantly,
> And the sun shone bright in a summer sky
> When we abroad were walking.
>
> I said, "My charming Mally dear,
> I cannot wed you now, I fear ;

For my ship to distant lands must steer,
And so we must be parting.

And then when I am far from you,
You'll forget your jolly sailor true,
And give your heart to another blue,
Who may be a deceiver."

"Oh William, William!" aloud she cries,
While tears came streaming from her eyes,
"Your faithful loving Mally dies,
The day you from her wander.

When you are gone, my William dear,
Beneath the waves I shall disappear,
And the dark sea-weed shall be my bier,
And soft shall be my slumber."

My arms her waist then did entwine,
I wiped her cheeks and kissed her then;
Cheer up, cheer up, love, you shall be mine,
I've said all this to try you.

Here is a ring for your lily hand,
Here's gold to buy what you may command,
For to-morrow joined in wedlock band
We shall no more be parting.'

"Ay, dat's a right sang, Leezie," said Tammie o' Tümheads. "I aye laek ta hear a sang dat ends weel."

"Den I hoop du hes ane ready dat'll end weel, Tammie," said Leezie, "for it's dy turn neist."

"O! an' so it is!" exclaimed Tammie. "I wis just firyattin' dat. Weel, I'll gie you da 'Boatman's Sang,' fir dat ane baith begins an' ends weel enouch."

THE BOATSMAN'S SONG.

'Janny, get my sea bread;
I hoop du hes it clare;[1]
Da sky is saftly marled ower,
A sign o' wadder fair.

Fir I'm gaen ta da far haaf,
Because the wadder's fair,
An' a bonnie lock o' fish we'll hae
Ta lay upo' da ayre.[2]

[1] Ready. [2] Beach.

Get me my büddie made o' gloy,[1]
Dat hings ahint da door;
My skinjub an' my sea-breeks,
An' see dey're hale afore.
Fir I'm gaen ta da far haaf, &c.

Pit in my mittens an' my dags,[2]
An' mind a keg o' blaand;
Ta slock[3] my trist,[4] fir weel du kens
Da wark we hae in haand,
Whin we ir at da far haaf, &c.

My sea büits[5] an' my kütitikens,[6]
Just see dey're in da büddie;
My mussel-draigs, my lempit[7] pick,
An' sae my lempit cuddie.[8]
Fir I'm gaen ta da far haaf, &c.

My snüids[9] an' handlin rex me doon,
Dey're dere upo' da lame,
An noo dat's a', Lord be wi' dee,
Fir I maun geng fae hame,
An' geng ta da far haaf, &c.

Da pirr[10] o' wind is fae da wast,
An' we'll heist up da sail,
Until we come ta fishin' grund
Whaur we can set an' hail.
Whin we come ta da far haaf, &c.

Bit first geng out an' meet wi' me,
Just as I leave da door;
Fir weel I ken dy fit hes luck,
As I hae fun' afore,[11]
Whin I gaed ta da far haaf, &c.

Sae Lord be wi' dee noo, an' keep
Baith dee an' a' da bairns;
He kens dat baith fir dee an' dem
My very heart it yerns,
Whin I am at da far haaf, &c.

---

1 Stiff oat straw. 2 Half mittens. 3 Quench. 4 Thirst. 5 Boots. 6 Socks.
7 Small iron chisel for removing limpets from the rocks.
8 Small creel for collecting limpets in.
9 The thin lines put next the hooks in the gear for fishing the sethe.
10 Slight breeze gently ruffling the surface of the water.
11 See note O. Superstitions of fishermen.

Keep up dy hert an' dünna greet
As aft doos düne afore ;
Bit tink upo' da lock o fish
We're shüre to bring ashore,
Whin we come fae da far haaf, &c.'

"Dy turn neist, Sandy," said Tammie, as he finished his song and gave young Sandy Flaws o' Flattriggs a nudge with his elbow. "Du dat haes sae muckle laer can gie us sontin' graand ; sae come awa noo, an' get up ta dy feet, an' say it laek a minister."

"Dy skimp[1] is wilcome," said Sandy; "bit since du wants me ta gie dee sontin' in da minister's line, I'll gie da 'Lost Boat,' an dat's better den mony a sermon du'll hear fae da poopit; an' sae I hoop ye'll a' pay attention, an' sit as quiet as ye wid dü i' da kirk," saying which Sandy rose to his feet, pushed back his chair, and gave the following recitation, which was listened to by the whole circle of lads and lasses with breathless attention:

THE LOST BOAT.

' The summer eve was still and beautiful,
The placid bay lay hushed in calm repose,
And tiny wavelets broke in murmur sweet
Upon the silvery sand. O'er Thule's hills
The radiant western sky, with fleecy clouds,
Was beauteous fair ; all Nature sweetly smiled,
And grey-haired sage, full deep in weather lore,
Could not discern of danger in the skies.
The anxious fisher hied him to the beach
To launch his boat upon the buoyant wave,
Spreading his sail before the gentle breeze,
To seek his finny prey in waters deep.
At many a cottage door a loving wife,
Mother, or blushing artless maiden stood,
Watching the tiny bark recede from sight
That bore away all dear on earth to them.
And when just lost to view a falling tear,
Or inward earnest prayer to Him
Who calms the seas, and rules the raging storms,
That He would keep them in His heavenly care,
And safely guide them on the pathless deep.

[1] Irony.

The sun now sinks beneath the western wave,
The lines are set, the boat lies gently rocked
Upon the bosom of the placid deep,
Waiting the midnight turning of the tide
That brings the fish to many a tempting bait.
But look! what mean those sudden swelling waves,
While yet the air is still and calm around?
It is the prelude of a coming storm,
Told by the scudding clouds athwart the sky.
Dull souching sounds are borne across the wave
That tell the tempest follows hard behind.
The anxious crew now ply the bending oar,
And "hail" their lines with energetic speed.
But soon the breaking waves and lashing spray
Force them to cut away the straining line.
The close-reefed sail now hoisted to the gale,
The well-tried skipper, of unrivalled skill,
With lips compressed, and strong and sinewy arm,
Seizes the helm and draws the dripping sheet;
Fast through the hissing waves the boat she flies,
Rushing and bounding like a thing of life.
With watchful eye, and quick and steady hand,
The skilful pilot runs to lee and weather
Of towering waves that soon would overwhelm
His fragile bark beneath the swelling foam.
Oft from the jaws of death he quickly glides:
The yawning grave beneath the crested wave,
In clamouring rage wide opens for its prey.
Alas! to tell the tale: On that sad day,
A noble crew thus battled with the storm;
A father, two sons, and a son-in-law—
A braver crew not found on Thule's shore.
When just in sight of land, a mighty wave
Swept quick their boat beneath its surging tide,
And left them struggling on the raging foam.
Now on the slippery keel at last they cling,
Oft deep submerged beneath the angry waves;
Rising again into the raging blast,
The lashing spray beats on them furiously.

Ah! who can tell the agonising thoughts
Of home and dear ones to be seen no more,
That nerved the stiffening forms and *numbed* grasp

Of heroes battling with remorseless fate.
Inscrutable decree ! what dare we say ?
Though ties are broken by the angry wave,
No tempest rages on that peaceful shore
Where tears flow not, and parting is unknown.
With early dawn upon the dizzy heights,
Mothers, sisters, and wives are seen
Straining their tearful eyes upon the sea
Still raging wild with foaming billows white ;
And as each speck of sail appears in view
Is raised aloud a cry of hope and fear.
At last, all one by one, the tempest-tossed,
They round the point and safely gain the strand,
Except, alas ! that one which never more
Shall fill its place upon the shingly beach.
In vain, mother, sister, and a loving wife
Still gaze upon the sailless watery waste,
Their slender forms bending 'gainst the blast,
While flitting to and fro along the cliff.
Again and again, in wild despair
Return they to their friends upon the beach
To hear false hopes as kindly oft repeated
By lips trembling by sympathetic grief.
But, ah ! the dread hour at last must come
When hope dies out, and whispering groups
Betray the fatal truth.
By friendly arms supported, sorrowfully
They reach the cheerless home, now desolate ;
And then is heard the shriek of agonizing woe !
Bursting hearts, and eyes that will not weep,
For grief has made those friendly fountains dry.
Is there on earth a beating human heart
That all unmoved could see such human woe,
Could hear that wail of lamentation deep,
And not sob out his sympathizing grief ?
O ! Thou who temper'st to the shorn lamb
The chilling winds of early vernal spring,
Come with the balm of thine own consolation,
And pour it on the wounded, bleeding heart ;
And in the shadow of this vale of tears
Shine bright upon the mourners' lonely path,
And point them to that heavenly home
Where friends are not lost but gone before.'

To kirk or manse hoo fair to see
A score o' pairs geng leadin';
Wi' ribbins fleein' an' fiddles playin',—
Just every week a weddin'.

Wi' merry heels at rants an reels,
Da barn flürs wis shakin';
"*But*" ower the muckle pot boils brown,
Sic castin'[1] scones an' bakin'.

Pork hams, skenk houghs,[2] an' reisted[3] geese,
Dried saucer[4]-meet an' spaarls;
Milky scones an' soonie scones,
Heat burstan bread an' faarls[5].

Der wis a fouth o' meat an' drink,
An' welcome a' might chance in,
To sit doon at the festive board
Or join the fun an' dancin'!

But lit wis leave da weddin' folk,
Ta dance an' reel till mornin';
An' geng roond by the stane yard deck,
Dat hes da screws o' corn in.

Dere Eddie Tam hes killed his grice,
An' Eppie puddins makin';
Baith black an' white, da meal an' seam,
Shü heans[6] na weel ta pack in.

Den in da pot wi' careful haand,
Shü plumps dem ane by ane in;
An no ta lit dem spleet or spue,
Fast ower she pricks a pin in.

But near da lum twa triky cheelds,
A while dey hae been watchin',
An' if dey're lucky, as dey tink,
Some queer fish dey'll be catchin'.

Fir four ling huiks, like mussel draig,
Wi' lead an' string fir lowerin',
Dey'll quietly slip doon i' da pot,
Whin Eppie taks ta snorin'.

---

1 Making pancakes. 2 Beef houghs. 3 Smoked.
4 Dried sausages. 5 Thin bannocks. 6 Spares.

Ay, there gengs ane up through da reek,
O' puddins clare fir eatin',
While Eppie snores, and Eddie glowers,
Just whaur he's sweein' da feet in.

An' dere goes twa, tree, four, and five,
Da sixt da huik aff jumped,
And doon da height o' lum it fell,
An' in da kettle plumped.

Da splash sent oot a waterspoot
Ower Eppie's fit and brunt it;
When oot shü roars, "My Lord, my fit,
My hoose wi' ghosts is hunted."

Up jimps auld Eddie roong in haand,
An' oot da door gengs spangin',
An' swears he'll catch da puddin' tieves,
An' end da sport by hangin'.

But aff da riggin' quick as cats,
An' ower da yard-deck fleein',
As weel might Eddie chase twa ghosts,
Or try if he could see ane.

A merry day wis Auld Yüle Day,
An' up we aye got early,
To try wir New Yule suits o' claes,
An' see dey fitted fairly.

Fine corduroy or moleskin grey,
Wi' buttons brichtly shinin';
Nae prince in a' da laand e'er tocht
His robes he luiked mair fine in.

Wir güid Scots bonnets, red an' black,
In cheques aboot da brim wis;
Da tap a bunch o' flashy red,
An' in da croon a rim was.

Noo see Yüle mornin's brakwist set,
Da table weel is heaped
Wi' scones an' cakes, boiled cocks and drakes,
Da bottle an' da teapot.

Loaf bread an' biscuit fae da toon
O Lerick fills a basket;
An' bairns tak whate'er dey like,
An' never need to ask it.

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O Lerick fills a basket;
An' bairns tak whate'er dey like,
An' never need to ask it.

Da brakwist ower—wi' baa' an' gun
Aff ta da links we run fast,
An' gled to fin' whin we cam dere
Dere wis nane o' da fun past.

Dere scores o' boys wi' bang an' noise,
Da wind baa's keeps careerin';
While shots fae guns wi' big touch holes
Gae some poor gunners sair een.

A' dey lang, bang gengs da baas,
Sic fechtin', faain', an' racin',
Dat new claes maks us sairly dread
At hame ta shaw wir face in.

Wi' legs weel tired at close o' day
We slept da nicht sae soondly;
Bit still in draem da licht wind baa'
Kept iver dancin' roondly.

Auld sober sense, an' prime soor dook
Micht ca' da day a fûle day,
Bit ta da hert o' sprichtly youth
A glorious day wis Yûle Day.

An' noo amid dis world's change
In scenes far distant lyin',
Whaur art o' man wi' fairest forms
O' Nature ever viein';

Da sweetest strains o' music heard
Wi' a' da pomp an' graander,
O' city wi' its pleasures gay,
Whaur youthful choice may wander:—

Yet I can see dey've pleased me no;
An' aft ta cure my chagrin,
I've wissed ance mair for *Auld Yule Day*
My leaden guns and baa' green.'"

"Weel, I be hanged," exclaimed Johnnie o' Greentaft, slapping his thigh and rubbing it with his hand, "if dat's no da best we've heard da nicht; it's really capital! Man, whaur fell du in wi' dis, an' fu can du mind on it, sic a length as it is? Ay! da wrater o' dat is been a Shetlandman, an' no mistake. He kens a' aboot it; an' weel he can tell his tale."

"I'm blyde ye're a' pleased wi' it," said Walter; "bit wha's neist ta carry on da glory o' it?"

"O, it's dee, Girzie, my jewel; come awa an' gie us sontin' sweet," added Walter, as he put his arm around her waist, and tried to give her a kiss.

"Geng awa an' kiss Jeannie o' Voe," cried Girzie Güillet, as she drew herself away from Walter, and lifted her hand to give him a slap on the cheek.

"O, mercy!" exclaimed Walter, as he covered his ears with his hands; "hae mercy upo' me dis time, an' I'll never dü it agen; bit come awa, my dautie, an' gie us dy bonnie sang, an' I sall be best man at dy weddin'; an' den, as Hill Robbie said, 'I'll get drams an' get kiss o' bride enko!'"

"Ay, come awa, my bairn," said Bawby, "an' gie us 'Da Auld Wife's Fireside;' dat's ane fir me, du kens."

"Weel," said Girzie, "I'll try an' sing dat sang just ta your ainsel, Bawby; bit if I cud help it, dis füil sinner dat's sitten at my side sudna hear a wird o' it," she added, as she sang in a clear merry voice

THE AULD WIFE'S FIRESIDE.

'Da wind is roarin' i' da lum,
Dere's snawdrifts deep on every side;
Bit what cares shü for wind or snaw,
Wi' comfort at her fireside?
Da auld wife's fireside,
Wir auld grannie's fireside;
Na place in a' da world wide
Sae cosy as her fireside.

Her dog an' cat upo' da heart
In friendship dear dey aye confide,
An' puss purrs ower his waggin' tail
By da auld wife's fireside.
Da auld wife's fireside, &c.

Her hoose as clean as ony preen,
An' things dat wir her midder's pride
Are dere, nae warr yet o' do wear,
By da auld's wife fireside.
Da auld wife's fireside, &c.

Her wheel rins roond wi' muckle din,
Her fingers ower da yarn slide ;
Da cairds, da wheel, da knitten' wires
Ne'er slacken at her fireside.
Da auld wife's fireside, &c.

Her teapot's mask'd four times a day,
Da truth she dūsna need ta hide,
Fir a drap o' tae is just her life
An' comfort o' her fireside.
Da auld wife's fireside, &c.

Wi' airs o' meal, an teats o' 'oo
Shū says " da Lord will her provide ;"
Fir aye shū fan' His promise true
Sin first shū hed a fireside.
Da auld wife's fireside, &c.

In winter nichts aroond her fire
Da lads an' lasses laek ta bide ;
Fir kind wirds aye shū hes ta say,
Ta a' dat's roond her fireside.
Da auld wife's fireside, &c.

Sic fairy tales as shū can tell
An' giants dat tree miles cud stride ;
Wi' ghosts an' goblins maks you grue
At nicht ta leave her fireside.
Da auld wife's fireside, &c.

An' whiles shū tinks o' days gane by,
An' when shū wis a bonnie bride,
Sic tochts maks tears come trinklin' doon,
When lanely at her fireside.
Da auld wife's fireside, &c.

Bit trials tho' mony shū hes hed,
At Providence shu does na chide ;
Tho' a' are noo laid i' da mūld,
Dat ance wir roond her fireside.
Da auld wife's fireside, &c.

Her Bible den her only joy,
In days whin shū wis sairly tried ;
An' still shū seeks da " Promised Laand "
In it, oft by her fireside,
Da auld wife's fireside, &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

The nicht drave on wi' sangs and clatter.
BURNS.

"LORD bless dy sweet voice, my bairn!" exclaimed Bawby; "a bonnie fireside indeed! May we a' seek dat Promised Laand, an' den we'll no mis dis weary world;" and Bawby clasped her hands, looking devoutly up to the lum. "Noo, my bairns," she added, "da nicht's spendin', sae ony ane dat's neist say awa. Ay, it's dee Jamie; du'll tell wis a story, an' I ken dere's nane i' da hoose dat can beat dee at dat."

"Oh, you manna skimp me," said Jamie M'Kennie o' Scartness; "bit whidder or no, I sall tell you ane o' da best I mind apon; an' no ta hae ony lees in it, I'll geng nae farder awa den last simmer, when I wis rowin' at dat Ness sea."

JAMIE'S TALE.

"Da saith hed begun ta get a kind o' clumpsed, an' shü widna lift i' da scrüiff idder, fir wing[1] or skag, an' draigin,[2] excep fir bait, wisna wirt tryin', sae wir men tocht dat we wid hae a shot wi' da tows. Weel, we made a' ready, an' wi' a lock o' stanes i' da efter shot, an' a single reef i' da sail, we ran oot an' east till we hed da Toogs[3] afore da widder, an' den we tüik doon an' set aff; and whin we flang wir ooter bow,[4] we

[1] Bait cut from the belly of a fish near the gills.
[2] Fishing sethe by running the line to the bottom (sometimes they are fished in the surface).
[3] A fisherman's "meethe" or landmark, by which he knows where to find a particular fishing ground.
[4] Buoy.

hed da Hammer o' Scord[1] at Noness. We den ran ta wir inner bow an' began ta hail, an' efter we hed aboot a packie an' a half in, da tow began ta snore heavy upo' da cabe.[2] Says I ta Eddie Maikimson dat wis hailin', 'Ye're shürely i' da grund,[3] Eddie,' says I. 'Na, faith, boy,' says he, 'dere's a fish apo' me, an' a heavy ane tü.'

"'Andoo[4] aisie, boys,' says Eddie ta da men dat wir upo' da fore taft; an' den in a peerie start he cries agen, *shoo*;[5] an' wi' dat a perfet monster o' a turbot rises i' da scrüiff, wi' da tows wuppled an' wuppled roond aboot 'im; sae we managed ta get his head upo' da gunnel,[6] an', if ye'll believe me, wir keel wis nearly oot o' da water afore we got him in ower; an' den, Lord save me, as his tail lay i' da eft stammeron,[7] an' his head across da fore taft, an' as fat as he cud lie within da hide. A peerie while efter we got him in he gies a awful fluffer, till da boat shüick anunder him agen, an oot he spues a great muckle ling, wi' a winderful muckle belly. Eddie taks da tullie ta see what dis is dat's in 'im, an' just as he rits up da fish, oot flees a kittywake.[8] Shü jimps upo' da mid taft, flapps her wings, an' spues up twa bricht skags, an' aff shü flees skeet-ip-a-leerie."

"O, Jamie, Jamie!" exclaimed Rasmie Rudderhead, "du's a boy!"

"Düs du mean ta say dat I'm tellin' a lee?" inquired Jamie with well-feigned surprise.

"Du, du," replied Rasme; "no a wird o' a lee ever du tell'd a' dy days; an' sae we'll no fa' oot aboot it, as Geordie here is just waitin' ta gie's a sang."

"Ay, come awa, my bairn," said Bawby, "an' sing wis dat bonnie sang I mind dee singin' here ae time last year. Da wirds o' it I tink wis, 'Hoo happy wir da days o' my early youth.'"

"O ay, dat's no a bad sang, if I cud only sing it richt," said Geordie Oman, smiling bashfully; "I'm bit a puir haand

1 Another "meethe." 2 Thowl. 3 Rocky bottom.
4 To pull slowly. 5 Pull backwards. 6 Gunwale.
7 Double knee in the stern and prow of a boat. 8 Kittiewake (*Larus Tridactylus*).

at singin' onything, Bawby."

"O, haud dy tongue, Geordie," exclaimed Bawby; "dere's no a better singer i' da hoose; sae just come awa noo, an' nae mair aboot it."

"Dere's nae üse o' me sayin' no ta you, Bawby," said Geordie, as he cleared his throat, and gave in a fine musical voice,—

THE SONG.

'How happy were the days of my early youth,
When my heart was joyous and free,
As I stood on the shore of my native isle
And gazed on my native sea!

When its murmuring waves sung a lullaby
Like the mermaid's evening tune;
When she sweetly plays on her coral harp
By the light of the silvery moon.

How sweet was the scene, when at the evening serene
Those murmuring waves were at rest,
As quietly they lay in a slumber sweet,
Like a babe on its mother's breast.

When no voice was heard from the silent shore,
Nor sound from the silent sea,
Save the evening cry of the caloo bird,[1]
With its soft wild melody.

"Coo a coo a caloo," sang the lonely bird,
At the close of a summer's day,
When its sweet wild notes o'er the calm still sea
In the distance melted away.

I've tasted such pleasures as life can afford,
And sweetest of music I've heard;
But none of them all e'er my heart could enthrall
Like that song of the caloo bird.

For the sun of my life was then rising serene
And my heart was a stranger to care;
And the murmuring waves and the sea bird's cry
Were the music that charmed my ear.

[1] *Heralda Glacialis.*

When mine eyes close last on this changing scene,
And life's sounds in mine ear melt away;
Let me hear the voice of the caloo bird
At the close of a summer day.

Let me hear the waves as they murmur past
And whisper "life's tempest is o'er;"
Let them hush me to sleep in a slumber deep
By my own dear native shore.'

"O dear a dear," exclaimed Bawby, "what a sweet sang dat is! Dat verse aboot da caloo aye maks me laek ta greet, fir it brings back ta my mind da time whin I was a peerie lass staandin' afore my fedder's door in a fine calm simmer's evenin', hearin' da caloos far awa ower da still sea. It was just laek da sweet music o' fairyland, as da saying is. Bit, Ellie, it's dee neist, my bairn,"

"O Bawby, ye manna ax me ta sing," said Ellie Inkster, "fir I'm hearse wi' da cauld; bit I'll tell you a story, an' dis is, I tink, da best ane I can mind upon.

"Dere wis ance apon a time whin robbers wis gaen aboot da kuntry, an' naebodie wis safe even i' der hooses, unless dey hed strong doors an' bolts, an' plenty o' guns an' swirds aboot dem. A jantleman's hoose stüd by itsel in a lonely pairt o' da kuntry, an' da family wir a' awa excep ae servant dat wis left ta keep da hoose, an' shü wis tauld whin da family güid awa ta lit naebodie in da hoose, idder nicht or day. Sae der's nae mair o' dis till aboot a ouk or sae efter da family hed left, whin ae nicht efter it wis fairly dark, an auld begger wife cam ta da door shiverin' wi' cauld, an' her teeth clatterin' da taen upo' da tidder.

"'O, my dear lamb," says da auld wife, 'I'm lost my wy, an' I'm just laek ta fa' doon wi' cauld an' hunger; an' if ye wid just lit me in ta your ketchin ta warm mysell, I widna bide lang.'

"'O,' says da lass, 'ye can come in;' fir shü tocht dat a auld begger cud dü na ill ta onybody; sae shü taks her in an' sets her in a shair at da side o' da fire, an' gies her a het drink; an' sae wi' da heat o' da fire an' da heat o' da drink,

efter a peerie while shü notices dat da begger begins ta get sleepy laek ; an' den in a while agen shü's fairly soond asleep, snorin' wi' her head back ower, an' da auld cloak shü hed aboot her a kind o' open wys. Da lass tinks shu'll luik an' see what kind o' claes da bodie has on anunder dis auld cloak ; an' shü lifts up ane o' da sides o' it carefully, whin, Lord preserve us, if shü düsna see a man's coat wi' a ledder belt on, an' a' sticket fu' o' pistols an' daggers ; an' whin shü luiks at da face it's a man's face wi' a' da whiskers shaved aff. When shü saw dis shü nearly screeched oot, bit it wis a mercy fae da Lord dat shü didna dü it, fir hed shü waukened da robber shü wid-a shüne been a corp in a short time. Shü clespet her haands, an' luiked wildly aboot ta see hoo shu cud escape, bit der wis nae wy ta her ta flee, fir dere wis shure ta be robbers ootside waitin' fir a signal, as shü saw da robber hed a whissel fir dis purpose. By dis time his head wis mair back ower, an' he wis lyin' snorin' wi' his mooth open, sae just in a moment shü grippet da boilin' tae-kettle aff da fire, an' poored da bulderin' watter doon his craig. He sprang ta his feet wi' a wild gron, an' den fell flat on his face upo' da flüir. An' a kind o' tremel güid ower his body fir a minit, an' den a' was still. Da püir lass wis noo laek to geng oot o' her judgment ; shü didna ken what ta dü, an' shü prayed ta da Lord ta strenten her as shü drew ane o' da pistols fae da robber's belt, an' took da whissel fae his breast. Shü noo guid tae da ooter door o' da hoose, an' luikin' trow da key-hole shü saw tree men walkin' aboot a piece awa fae da door ; shü den gie a lood whissel, an' in a minit da biggest ane o' da tree men cam up close ta da door, an' held his lug close ta da key-hole. Shü kent dis, fir shü heard da sough o' him drawing his breath. Shü noo cocked da pistol an' emmd as near whaur aboot his head wis as shü cud, den shü fired, an' just as da ball güid thro' da door shü heard a heavy fa' an' a gron ootside. Shü now luiked thro' da holl da ball hed made i' da door, an' saw

twa men rinnin' awa as fast as der legs cud carry dem.

"Shü cud dü nae mair noo fir daylicht cam, fir shü wis far awa fae ony idder human habitation. Sae shü güid an locked hersell inta a upstair's room, an' sat dere till da daylicht cam in. Shü den ran ta da neerest toon an' gae da alairm, an' shüne dere wis a number o' offichers at da hoose, an' fan da twa dead robbers lyin', ane i' da kitchen, an' da idder ane ootside da door, whaur he hed fa'en. Da idder twa wis catched shüne efter, an' dey wir baith hanged.

"Whin her mester cam hame he wis dat owerjoyed he sed he widna lit her be a sirvant ony mair, bit just be da sam as ane o' his ane family; an' sae shü bedd[1] wi' him fir some years efter dis, until shü wis mairried to a graand jantleman, an' her mester made her a graand weddin', an' settled mony upon her dat shü got sae muckle o' every year as lang as shü lived; an' sae my tale is düne."

During the time Ellie was telling her story she was listened to with breathless attention. The lasses ceased knitting, and let their hands fall on their laps, and the lads were equally absorbed in mentally following the heroine in so bravely defending her master's house. Bawby from time to time gave inaudible expression to her feelings by clasping her hands and looking up to the roof of the cottage.

"Eh, it wis a awfal death fir da sinner ta dee at last," she exclaimed; "but what cud da püir lass dü; shü hed nae idder wy o' savin' her ain life bit by takin' his. I mean da ane dat shü killed wi' da heat watter, fir shuttin' wis no sae awful laek, tho' it mebbe wis as easy ta dee da tae wy as da tidder. Ay, we sud a' be tankful dat wi' can sit anunder wir ain vine and fig-tree, an' nane daurin' ta mak wis afraid, as da Scripture says; bit, Nannie, it's dee neist, my bairn."

"Ae story pits anidder in a body's mind," said Nannie Ollie o' Ootvoe; "an' sae I'll just tell you anidder robber's story."

[1] Remained.

CHAPTER XIV.

As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure.
BURNS.

"DIS wis a jantleman's hoose da sam wy as Ellie's story," said Nannie Ollie, as she held her knitting between her and the light, and tried to recover a slipt loop, "bit da mistress wis left at hame hersell wi' twa servants, fir shü hed newly been mairried, an' da jantleman hed gane awa fae hame apon some business. Ae nicht efter dark, whin da mistress wis sittin' in her room up da stair, shü heard a awful noise i' da kitchen, an' den twa fearful screechs, an' shü ran doon stairs, an' da first dat met her sicht, wis baith her servants lyin' upo' da flüir wi' da red blüid gushin' fae der breests, an' five robbers standin' wi' drawn daggers i' der haands. As shüne as dey saw da mistress, dey closed roond aboot her, and sed, 'Your money or your life! We want da deys o' da jewel kist dats i' da strong celler.'

"'O,' says da mistress, 'ye sall get da keys an' a' dat's in da kist, fir my husband is very rich, an' we'll never miss it; so come wi' me,' shü says, 'an' I'll tak you ta da celler.'

"Sae awa she gengs doon a stair, an' da robbers efter her, till dey cam till a great muckle room, an' in da flüir o' dis room wis a hatch dat opened inta da celler aneath, whaur da jewel kist wis. Sae shü opened dis hatch, an' tüik a licht in her haand, an' güid doon da ledder an' four o' da robbers efter her, fir dey left ane at da tap o' da hatch to staand watch. Shü noo tüik her kees oot o' her pocket, an' tryed da lock o' da kist; bit nane o' dem wid open it. 'O,' says shü, 'dear a me! I'm left da key in

my room upstairs—just wait a minute an' I'll fetch it.' Sae awa shü trips up da ledder, an' gengs past da man, fir he heard what shü wis gean fir, an' sae never lüiked efter her. Da room wis a' dark, except da licht dat cam up trow da hatch, sae da man cudna hae seen her far, even if he hed lüiked; sae just as shü passed by her, shü wheeled aboot an' ran agenst him, wi' da whole poor o' her body, an' doon he fell head foremost! an' doon güid da hatch as quick as lightenin', an' as it fell it locked wi' a spring, sae dere dey a' wir fast an' ticht."

"O Lord be praised!" exclaimed Bawby, unable longer to restrain her feelings; "I wis just trimblin' fir da püir woman, tinkin' every moment what wis gaen ta come o' her. O da vagabonds, it saired dem weel; I hoop dey niver got oot till dey wir hanged."

"Ye're just guessed it, Bawby," said Nanny, "dey wir a' truly hanged. Püir woman, shü spent a oorie nicht, her twa murdered servants lyin' ae pairt o' da house, and five blüidy ruffians in anidder pairt o' da hoose; it wid a pitten mony a woman oot o' her reason; bit as shü sed efter, da Lord stüd by her, an' da mornin licht brocht help; for some bodie on da rod hed seen da geng gaen da wy for dis hoose, an' sent wird ta da toon; sae dat by daylicht, dere wis offichers at da hoose axin if ony robbers hed been seen, whin da mistress cud tell dem da happy news dat shü hed dem a' secure; sae dey wir taen up an hanged, as I'm sed already."

"Ay, an' saired dem richt," said Bawby, "or ony murderin' villans laek dem, dat wid tak da life o' twa püir innicent lasses; bit wha is neist, bairns, fir we maun be moovin' trow, ye ken?"

"It's my turn, Bawby," said Rasme Smith; "bit unless I tell you anidder robber story, dere's naethin' else I mind upon; an' dis is aboot a robber dat wis made up laek a pack o' güids, an' left at a fairmer's hoose. /fe·rmər/

"Ae nicht, just i' da mirkenin', dere cam a packman ta da fairmer's door, an' sed dat he wis tired wi' carryin' his pack sae far, an' ower late ta reach ta neist toon; an' sae he wid be blyde if dey wid just lit his pack lie atween da doors a' nicht, an he wid try an' get lodgins fir himsell wi' some o' da fairm servants. 'O,' said da fairmer. 'he wis truly welcome ta lit his pack lie dere a' nicht, fir it dü nae hairm ta onybody.' Sae he lays doon da pack, an' dere's nae mair o' dis, fir da peerie boy comes in dat lüiked efter da kie. Dis boy hed gotten a auld gun ta frichten da craws wi', an' he happened ta hae a shot o' pooder an' lead in it at da time. Sae he comes ta his maester, an' says he, 'What kind o' a pack is yon dat's lyin' inside da door dere?' Says his maester, 'It's just a pack like ony idder pack, I'm tinkin'—cloth an idder kind o' güids, shürely.' 'Na, na,' says da boy, 'der's mair in it den dat, fir I saw it moovin'.' 'Du saw it movin',' says his maester; 'du undümious[1] leer dat du is; fu can du tell me dat?' 'Yae, dat I truly did,' says da boy, 'I saw it movin', an' I'm gaen ta fire dis shot in it,' at da sam time aimin' da gun fir da pack. 'Lord preserve me!' says da fairmer, 'is da boy red mad? Is he gaen ta destroy da man's güids?' Bit afore da wirds wir oot o' his mooth, aff gengs da gun wi' a rumble; an' oot spoots a gush o' red blüid wi' a awful gron. Baith da boy an' his maester wir laek ta fa' doon wi' fricht, bit efter dey cam ta demsells, dey rins an' opens da pack, whin what sees dey bit a robber sittin' dead in a box wi' pistols an' swirds at his belt; an' he hed a whissel i' da tae haand, an' a knife i' da tidder, an' dis knife wis ta rit up da pack an' lat himsell oot, whin he wis ta whissel as a signal fir da idder anes dat wis ta wait ootside. Sae, as ye may believe, da maester tocht muckle o' his boy, an' bocht him a fine new foolin'-piece as a present. Da dead robber wis taen awa wi' da offichers da neist day an' buried at a road-side, pack an' a', just as he lay; an' dat wis his end. O, it wis awful times den a

[1] Great, unlimited.

days.—I mind a story o' a man dat tüik lodgins in a kind o' a kuntrie inn ae nicht, an' he hed a dog wi' him, sae efter da man guid ta bed, da dog cam ta da foreside o' da bed an' began ta whinge, an' aye he jimped up wi' his fore feet upo' da bed, an' den shived his head anunder da bed. Da man tried ta get da dog ta lie doon, bit da mair he spak till him da mair he whinged,[1] till da man tocht he wid get up an' see if dere wis ony thing anunder da bed, when, Lord preserve us, what sees he bit a man lyin' murdered dere wi' his troat cutted fae lug ta lug! Sae, as micht be tocht, he wisna lang in gettin' on his claes an' fleein' oot o' da hoose fir his life as fast as he cud, an' his dog wi' him."

"Noo, Bawby," exclaimed Girzie o' Glufftoon, "as da Lord made me, I'll never leave your hoose dis nicht; every bit o' me is just quakin'; my very flesh is pipperin'[2] upo' my banes wi' faer wi' hearin' sae mony awful stories."

"Weel, weel, my bairn," rejoined Bawby, "du can sleep aside me a' nicht, an' den na bokies[3] 'll touch dee; bit I tink we'll hae a sang noo, an' dat'll pit da gluff aff o' wis agen. An sae bairns, just sae awa—wha's neist? O, it's dee, Eric; come awa den like a man, an' gie's Grannie Thule. I ken du can sing dat weel, an' a bonnie tüne it is."

"O, Bawby," said Eric Moad, "I tink ye're skimpin' me, fir ye ken weel enouch I'm timmer-tüned; bit never mind, I'll dü as weel as I can, an' da best can dü nae mair," saying which Eric cleared his throat, and sang in a good bass voice,

THE TRIALS O' GRANNIE THULE.[4]

"Thule, an auld wifie wha lives on da "Rock,"[5]
Shü spins on her wheel, an' shü knits at her sock,
Shü gets help fae the laand, shü gets help fae the sea,
An' shü cheers up her hert wi' a cup o' strong tea.

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1 Moaned. 2 Trembling. 3 Bogles, ghosts.

4 Allusion is made in these verses to the various acts of oppression to which the Islands have been subjected since they were added to the Scottish Crown.

5 A name sometimes familiarly applied to Shetland.

But, waes me, püir Grannie, sair trials shü hes had,
An' tho' aft shü smiles, in her heart shü is sad,
When shü tinks o' the wy lang syne shü wis üsed,
An' a' her lang life been misca'ed an' abüsed.
O weel may shü ban whin shü tinks o' the loon
Dat gaed her awa ta da auld Scottish croon ;
Fir fae dat dey ta dis shü's been cheat an' oppressed
In her hoose an' her hadden been sairly distressed.
In da first o' her days her pund *was a pund*,
Her bairns hed aye der ain bit o' grund.
Her lespun' o' butter weighed sixteen pund neat,
An' her bysmer naebody cud sae wis a cheat.
But da auld pechan laird, in a stammer an' stutter,
Ae day let it oot dat he wanted mair butter ;
An' he said it need cause her bit little surprise
If her lespun' wis altered ta *double* da size.
Grannie said shü hed nae grit objection ta dat
If da siller was *double* o' last dat shü gat.
But he said nae deil plack wad he raise i' da price,
Though her lespun' o' butter wis da weight o' her grice.
He said mair den dat, he cud weel understand
Hoo her bairns wir spoilt by bein' lairds o' der land ;
An' he hed just a mind ta add ta his ain,
What " grippin ' " by fair means or foul cud obtain.
Whin da laird hed said dis he straddled awa,
An' puir Grannie's check was bleached like da snaw.
But shü just gaed ben ower an' sat in her chair,
An' grat lang an' sair till shü cudna greet mair,
Den her hens an' her cocks dat shü liked sae weel,
It made her hert sair ta hear der lood squeel,
Whin packed in a büddie by her auldest son Gawen,
An' aff ta da laird's ta get der necks trawn.
Den Eric, puir fellow, he hated da haaf,
An' ta Greenland whaal fishing' he just wid be aff,
But his fedder was fined in a pound an' a shillin',
Dat, püir man, ta pay he was sairly unwillin'.
As weel micht be tocht, Grannie needed her tea,
An' tar fir da boat an' lines fir da sea.
Bit nae shot daur shü geng near tho' cheaper by far
Den da laird's baith fir tea, an' fir lines, an' fir tar ;
Neist, her fish he maun hae at a price o' his ain,
Dat he sells ta da Dons an' da Papists o' Spain.
An' if shü gets four, whin o' pounds he got twenty,

He tocht da auld bodie hed just gotten plenty;
But it's nae üse o' tellin' a' shü's hed ta try her,
Her troubles hae followed like sparks fae de fire
An' her feeble auld nerves hae got sic a shock,
Shü nidder can spin nor knit at her sock;
Her teeth clatters awful wi' faer an' wi' fricht,
An' her friends ir just fearin' shü'll niver come richt.
Sae bairns, hame an awa, da question whidder,
In da hours o' distress ye'll forsake your auld midder.
No! loud raise your voice, let it ring o'er da sea,
An' shüre help 'ill come to Grannie Thule.'

"Puir bodie!" cried Bawby, shürely shü hed her trials; bit I wis aye tinkin ta spür dee, Eric, if du kens wha dis Grannie Thule wis. Da sang says shü lived on da rock; dat wad be da name o' da toon shü lived in; bit dere's nae place o' dat name in dis perrish. Wid it be awa at da Nord Isles, tinks dü?"

"O, it's no a auld wife ava, Bawby," said Eric; "it's just a sang made up aboot Shetlan', an tellin' da wy folk wis ill üsed lang sine syne; an' trath, as we a' ken, some o' dem is no muckle better üsed yet. Bit wha sings neist?"

"O, I'm just tinkin," replied Bawby, "it's peerie Jamie dat's sittin' dere i' da corner, bit he's mebbe dat bashful dat he'll no sing onything; sae some ane o' you 'ill hae ta gie wis a sang fir him."

"Weel, ye a' ken," said Sandy Flaus, "dat I cauna sing ony; bit I'll gie you anidder recitation. It's ca'ed 'Winter Thoughts on Thule,' an' it wis composed by da sam man dat wrote 'Da Lost Boat;' an' dis is it—

Winter Thoughts on Thule.

'Dear Thule! home of my early youth,
Bleak thy hills, and dark with many a seamy scaur,
Around thy rugged shores the wintry tempest raves,

And wild tempestuous waves, with thunderous roar,
Dash full against thy adamantine rocks.
Earth's fairest scenes beneath Italian skies,
The orange grove, the graceful drooping palm,
The clustering vine, in many a verdant vale,
With all the glories of those sunny climes,
Though spread in sweet enchantment to my view,
Could not emotions half so sweet awake
As do thy wintry winds and raging waves,
O Thule!

Those winds that whistled in the cottage door,
And sighed deep through thy lonely hills and vales;
When stern old Winter, armèd took the field,
And loud declared his elemental war,
Shaking his icy spear and snowy mantle
With angry grasp full in the northern blast;
Then seated by the homely cottage hearth,
The tempest loud was music in mine ear;
The whistling wind, like some Æolian harp
Of sweetest strain, charmed the hours away.
The blazing fire—the homely frugal fare
A regal feast by sweet contentment made;
The heart no sorrow knew—no wordly cares
O'er youth's bright day had yet their shadows cast.
Life, like a golden dream just new begun,
Knew only joy; and scowling winter's wildest rage
Was scarcely heard 'mid sounds of youthful mirth.

When perched upon the summit of some lofty rock,
How much I loved to watch thy mighty waves,
And see them sport their wild fantastic forms
As on with awful force they madly rushed
To dash against the quivering rock.
Then in the dread recoil, in dazzling white,
The seething foam like angry Maelstrom boiled
(That rages wild near Norway's rocky shore),
And whirling tempest raised the churnèd froth
Like drifting clouds of winter's flaky snow,
Fast chasing onward in the murky air.

On high with pinions spread, in graceful ease
The sea-gull soared upon the wintry blast,
To watch the tossings of the angry deep,

Which heaved from ocean's bed the struggling fish,
And, darting down, swift carried off her prey.

On that same rock, lashed by the briny spray
And driving sleet, oft have I watched
The curving waves, broke by th' impetuous wind;
And in their shadows dark I fondly thought
I saw the outline of some mighty wreck
Which soon upon the shelving beach might lie,
And I the owner of the glorious spoil.

Dear Thule! home of my infancy and youth,
How bright on memory's page those records stand
Which tell the story of my early days!
Thy rugged grandeur, and thy stormy waves,
My mind inspired with noble and heroic thoughts,
And my young heart did fondly wish the day
When I might do some mighty deed of valeur;
Best school to teach true manhood's nobler aims
Where Nature spreads her soul-inspiring page,—
Rocks, hills, and vales, with storms and raging waves
All whisper deep instruction to the mind—
Solemnly impressed with awe and veneration.
And youth so taught, oft in the race of life
Outstrips compeers, learned and refined,
And at the goal triumphant wins the prize.

How true this is, Thule, thou bearest witness
In many of thy sons who leave thy shores
To traverse wide the stormy pathless main,
Or seek their fortunes in far distant climes,—
An honour to the land that gave them birth.

CHAPTER XV.

A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large.
BURNS.

"OH, dat's a graand piece," exclaimed Bawby, as the last speaker finished his recitation; "bit da nicht is wearin' awa, sae wha's neist, my bairns?" she added.

"It's Maikie here, I tink," said Johnnie o' Greentaft.

"Weel, bairns," said Maikie o' Moorigarth, "ye'll mebbe no believe me, bit I can nedder sing, nor hae I da wirt o' a story ta tell you; bit I'll read you ane oot o' a peerie book I hae i' my pooch here. It's juist ower lang a story, bit ye can tell me whin ta leave aff."

So saying, Maikie opened his book and read as follows:—

BLACK ERIC; OR, THE MAN WITH THE IRON STAFF.

Fitful Head is one of those powerful barriers by which Nature fortifies her works, and, in accordance with her great design of combining utility and beauty, forms the most striking feature in the wild, romantic scenery which characterises the western shores of the northern group of the British Isles.

The mighty internal forces which upheaved those islands from ocean's bed were under the reign of law; and that law, directed by the unerring wisdom and foreknowledge of the Divine Architect, made provision against the power of the Atlantic waves, and the destructive agency of those huge icebergs of the glacial period which were borne from west to east by strong ocean currents; and this provision lay in the hardness and durability of the rock, and the height of the headland or cliff being exactly such as should effectually resist the destructive forces by which they were to be assailed.

Situated near the southern extremity of the mainland, Fitful Head occupies a position exposed to the powerful currents of the Atlantic and German Oceans, which sweep round its base with resistless force; and during a western hurricane the Atlantic rolls itself into mighty waves against those cliffs with the force of ten thousand battering rams.

Nature, therefore, in raising this bulwark, performed one of her greatest feats, for she seems to have cleft a mountain in two in order to obtain the proper combination of strength and beauty—placing the green slope of the mountain towards the east till its lowest extremity fringes the western shore of the loch of Spiggie, and its frowning rocky section towards the west to bid defiance to the ocean waves. The traveller, in ascending this headland, would therefore suppose that he is climbing a hill which must have a corresponding slope on its western side, but, on reaching the summit, he is appalled to find that he is standing on the verge of an abyss, the sight of which makes his very blood to curdle. Such is a faint description of Fitful Cliff, in which once dwelt, in an unknown cave, the subject of my tale.

Black Eric, as he was called by the country people, owing to his swarthy complexion and his dark matted hair, which hung in wild profusion around his shoulders, was a man of gigantic stature and proportions. Whether he belonged to the Celtic or Scandinavian race was a point which no one was ever able to determine, as, from the lawless life he led, and his constant exposure to the severities of the climate, all distinctive traces of races were so obliterated that he seemed to have a closer affinity to the ourang-outang or gorilla, than to any tribe of the human family. Beneath his shaggy eyebrows gleamed his deep-set, wolfish eyes, his beard and breast resembled that of the grizzly bear, and when enraged he showed a formidable set of clenched teeth which gave a horrible expression to his whole countenance.

His dress consisted of a buttonless jacket or "skinjuip," made of untanned calf-leather, with breeches of the same material tied with thongs at the knee. On his feet he wore unclipt "rivelins" of cow-hide, and on his head a dingy Fair Isle cap of many colours and strange pattern. He walked with a lithe slouching gait, with both hands resting on his haunches, and in them grasping a heavy iron bolt or staff, one end having a sharp point and the other a heavy knob. This formidable weapon he constantly carried with him, and, when asleep (for he frequently slept in the open air in the summer season), he placed his iron staff under his shoulders in such a way that it could not be touched without awakening him. He subsisted entirely by sheep-stealing, and, being as fleet of foot as a native colt, could run them down with the greatest ease. When making his incursions into the neighbouring hills, he generally left his cave after sunset, and when he knew no one was astir, and having secured a pair of the fattest sheep he could select, would bind their feet together, and raising them to his shoulders, by putting his iron staff between their fore and hind legs, march, by long and rapid strides, to the top of Fitful Cliff. How he descended this pathless steep with such a burden is a mystery which never can be solved, nor can any better opinion be formed regarding it than that which prevailed at the time,—and the popular belief then was, that Black Eric was in league with the powers of darkness, and that the demon Tangie was in his service, conveying him nightly between the top of the cliff and his cave-dwelling. This demon, well known to the natives of Shetland, always appeared in the form of a black horse, and as if grazing quietly by the side of lonely paths during the night-time. If the benighted traveller, mistaking him for a real animal, mounted upon his back with the view of being carried a certain distance on his way, Tangie, favoured by the darkness of the night, would carry his rider to the nearest cliff, who, happily becoming aware of his danger by

hearing the sound of the breaking waves below, would leap off and stand horror-stricken to see his horse vanish over the cliff in a flash of blue flame. One remarkable circumstance in favour of the popular opinion regarding Black Eric's connection with the demon Tangie was, that frequently during the night blue lights were seen by boats at the haaf-fishing, ascending and descending between the top of a cliff and a point below where Eric's cave was supposed to be; and the hour of the night when these mysterious lights were seen was found to correspond with the time he was known to leave or return to the cliff.

One of the greatest sufferers by the depredations of Black Eric was Sandy Breamer, who occupied a cottage on the eastern slope of the Wart Hill, and was one of the largest sheep-owners in that district. Accustomed to look carefully after his flocks, and keeping them always in good condition, they all the more readily excited the cupidity of the sheepstealer; scarcely a week passed but one or two "gimmers" or fat "hogs" were found to be amissing. Although a peaceably-disposed man, Sandy could not submit to have his property carried off in this manner by a desperate outlaw who was the terror and scourge of the whole country side; partly therefore on his own account, and partly in the interests of the public, he resolved to capture the thief, or perish in the attempt.

From the time Sandy determined on this desperate enterprise, to that night in which he carried it into execution, it seemed to absorb his whole being with an intensity which almost banished every other thought from his mind; but he carefully kept his own secret, and when listening to the complaints of others, who suffered like himself, he never allowed any expression to escape his lips which could indicate his own inward emotions. At his own fireside his manner was less reserved, nor could he altogether conceal from his wife the fact that there was something more than usual occupying his mind

and deeply absorbing his thoughts. She had observed this, and that on his return from the fishing he did not caress his little children as was his wont, but would sit with his arms folded looking abstractedly into the fire, the inward perturbation of his mind showing itself by his compressed lips and knit brow, and the swelling muscles of his powerful arms, and heaving chest, as in thought he called up the immense resources of physical power by which he was endowed, and the great purpose of his life which was now to be accomplished by it.

On such occasions his wife would startle him from his reverie by placing her hand gently on his arm and saying, "Sandy, what is du tinkin aboot, dat du's aye sittin' stoorin' i' da fire? Lord hae a' care o' dee, is dere ony thing da maitter wi' dee? Is du vexed aboot da loss o' twa or tree gimmers, whin I'm shüre du kens we hae enouch left? O, Sandy, Sandy! da tocht sometimes comes into my mind dat du may be temped ta geng ta dat evil place, Fitful Head, an fa' in wi' dat foul fiend Black Eric. O! my Sandy, whin I tink o' dis it maks my flesh creep, and sets a feichtin' ta my hert, dat I'm like ta fa' doon; may He dat made us preserve us, an' set a watch roond us, an' a' dat belangs ta us! but dey say dat he gengs ower da banks every nicht wi' Tangie, in a blue lowe, for da men at da sea hae aften seen blue lichts gaen up an' doon da face o' da banks lang after dayset. O! Sandy, if ony thing was ta happen ta dee, what wid come o' me an' dis twa infants? We wad hae ta geng an' beg wir bit fae door to door; for du kens dere is nane idder upo' dy side or mine dat wid tak me ta der fireside."

"Toot, toot," Sandy would say, forcing a smile on his handsome face. "Annie, what i' da wörld pits sic nonsense i' dy head? du's aye frichtenin da bairns wi' Black Eric, an' noo I tink du's frichtened for him dysel. Keep up dy heart, lass, naethin will happen me till God's time comes. Sae get du da tae ready as fast as du can, for I'm baith tired an' hungry, and tinkin little eidder

aboot da sheep or Black Eric, I can assure dee." Thus Sandy would throw off his abstracted air and speak kindly to his wife, whom he loved dearly, and whose fears he was anxious to quiet, but still his purpose was never for a moment shaken, and it was his hope and study to carry it out without his wife's knowledge. Being no believer in demonology, he looked upon Black Eric merely as a beast of prey, which in the interests of society ought to be destroyed, and had the fulles confidence in himself that this task he was able to accomplish.

Sandy Breamer was a man in prime of life; his blue eyes and flaxen hair showed his true Scandinavian descent. His hair, parted in the middle and plaited in a tail of considerable length, which hung down his back according to the prevailing fashion of the time, gave his handsome countenance an almost feminine expression when animated by the gentle passions of social endearments; but when aroused in anger, that same face would have well represented one of David's "two lion-like men of Moab." A sight of his full-developed chest and powerfully knit arms would have rejoiced the heart of any artist painting a Hercules. Indeed, it was a common remark in the district where he was best known that "Sandy Breamer never knew his own strength," for in none of his ordinary avocations by sea or land did there ever arise an occasion to fully test the resources of his tremendous muscular power. His ordinary dress was sailor's duck trousers, worn without braces, and a knitted worsted frock, with alternate stripes of black and grey, which, fitting tight around his body, showed off his athletic frame to great advantage. On his head he wore a striped knitted cap, and on his feet the ordinary cowhide "rivelins."

The sun an hour ago had sunk beneath the western wave, the dim grey outline of Foula Isle lay like a fragment of cloud against the distant horizon, and the mariners' guiding star shone out in the dark-blue sky with a twinkling serene lustre. The slumbering Atlantic lay hushed in rest, and no sound broke the

stillness of the night save the tiny wavelets on Rerwick Sands, or as they gently lapped against the dark rocky masses which lined the shore, or gurgled amongst the tangled seaweed which hung in dense masses around the base of stack or cliff. Man and beast had retired to rest, but Sandy Breamer slept not. The time had come for entering upon the hazardous enterprize which had so long occupied his thoughts, and rising gently from the side of his sleeping wife and innocent babes he quickly dressed, and when ready to quit the cottage he turned to take a last look of those dear ones, lying like emblems of purity and innocence, breathing softly in the slumber of peace and health. His heart yearned over them, and fondly would he have kissed their parted lips, fair as dew-wet rose-buds, but he dared not awaken them, and, summoning all his courage, with a softly whispered "God bless you," he gently lifted the latch of the door, and was soon on his way toward the dark-frowning mass of Fitful Head. Descending the slope of Lunnabist, he crossed the Vadle Brigg, and striking along the western shore of the loch of Spiggie, ascended Fitful Head, keeping far to the east, and then taking a westerly direction along the edge of the cliff until he came within a hundred yards of the spot where the blue lights had been so often observed by boats at the fishing, as had been already mentioned. There crouching down, he crept on silently over the smooth turf, now covered by a thick-falling dew. Pausing, and looking between him and a streak of light in the western sky, his heart bounded as he thought he saw the outline of a cowering figuere resting on a fragment of rock a few yards from the edge of the cliff. Holding his breath and creeping on his hands and knees, as the distance between him and the dark object lessened, his belief increased that the lawless freebooter, the inveterate sheepstealer, the unholy consorter with demons and devils, was at last within his grasp. It is evident that demons, like mortals, are subjected to erratic movements, for the hour had long since passed when Tangie

should have been in attendance on his patron in order to convey him to his rocky cave; but now the grey dawn was beginning to show itself over Noness Head, and Black Eric still rested on his stone seat, apparently in a deep slumber. His appearance in the dim twilight was like a huge baboon sitting in a crouching attitude, his head resting on his shaggy bosom, and his long sinewy arms folded and resting on his knees. Before him, and within a few feet of the rock on which he sat, lay his iron staff with the pointed end towards the cliff. To this object Sandy noiselessly crept, and, grasping firmly the heavy end of the bolt, sprang to his feet. Instantly, like a serpent uncoiling itself, Black Eric shot up from his seat on the rock, and with a growl, like that of the Polar bear, bounded towards Sandy, making a desperate clutch at his iron staff; but the latter, holding the weapon in his left hand, dealt his adversary such a tremendous blow with his right as sent him reeling for several yards along the smooth turf. Quickly recovering himself, he again rushed forward, muttering curses between his clenched teeth; but Sandy, taking a step or two in advance to meet him, said in a firm, deep-toned voice, "Stop dere, Eric, here is dy staff; but as dy last 'oor is come, du'll need her no more, an' so here she goes," —with which Sandy hurled the bolt over the cliff. Again turning to Black Eric, he continued, "Noo, Eric, we are baith alaek, haand ta haand an' fit ta fit, wi' a' dy strent sell dy life as dearly as du can, for I swear by heaven aboon us dat nidder Tangie nor Brownie, nor a' da devils o' hell, sall save dee noo; dey'll get dee when I'm dün wi' dee, an' soon eneuch dat'll be, as du'll fin' ta dy cost." To this Black Eric uttered not a word, for he was almost chocked with rage. He stood to his full height, his powerful sinewy arms curved and drawn towards his sides, his huge bony hands clenched as if in mortal agony, his set teeth exposed with a horrible grin, and his wolfish eyes gleaming hate and revenge from beneath his shaggy eye-brows,

looking altogether the very incarnation of evil. Why Sandy did not at once rid the world of such a being, which he could so easily have done by the great weapon he had just thrown over the cliff, may appear strange ; but Sandy Breamer, though a plain man and dressed in a homely garb, was ennobled by that which alone distinguishes the truly great—he possessed all the high-souled chivalry of the knights of the olden time, and scorned to take any undue advantage of even such a depraved and desparate character as Black Eric the sheepstealer. Sandy considered it was the natural right of every creature possessing life to defend that life to the last, and that the conflict between him and his adversary should be on equal terms, and the victory gained by the strongest arm. As the crouching tiger contracts his powerful muscles, and gathers up his strength for the flying leap, which shall fasten him upon his prey ; as the hungry wolf on the snowy wastes of Sibera flies at the throat of the benighted traveller, so did Black Eric, with all the enormous strength of his giant frame, bound towards his antagonist, and attempt to grapple him by the throat. But Sandy was on his guard, and ere the ruffian could fix his grasp, a powerful blow from the right arm of the former fell on his chest, with an almost metallic ring, which made him throw a backward somersault, and roll over almost to the edge of the cliff. There he lay motionless for a few seconds, and then rising slowly, and affecting a limping gait, he advanced a few steps towards his assailant, who was again on his guard, for he knew the cunning of this wild beast in a human form, and that what he could not do by main force he would try to accomplish by stratagem—and this was too soon proved, for passing Sandy, and moving in the direction of the stone seat already alluded to, he suddenly wheeled round, and, eluding the heavy blow aimed at his head, locked his giant arms round Sandy's waist and bore him to the earth. And now a fearful struggle began. Rolling his antagonist under him, Sandy tried to disengage

himself from his fiendish embrace, but Black Eric had learned that he was no match against the swing of the fisherman's powerful arms in a free fight, and therefore he clung to his adversary with the tenacity of a jaguar. As they quickly rolled over each other like two fierce tigers, Black Eric endeavoured to shift his grasp so as to encircle Sandy's chest with the intention of crushing him, as the boa-constrictor crushes the buffalo; but Nature, in constructing Sandy's physical frame, had used no sparing hand; his capacious chest, as if ribbed with bars of iron, yielded not beneath the savage hug of his fiendish antagonist. By a superhuman effort, he now rolled his enemy beneath him, and, grasping him fiercely by the throat, forced him to unlock his arms, and as they fell by his side Sandy sprang to his feet without the least symptom of fatigue.

Black Eric also leaped from the ground, exclaiming, with the words hissing through his teeth, "Curse dee, du Norwegian dog, but my next grip will brak every bane i' dy ugly carcase, and fling dee ower that black rock as I flung da picked banes o' dy fattest sheep."

"Black Eric," said Sandy, in firm measured sentences, "it was my wish ta gie dee a fair death, or else I could hae pinned dee ta da spot whaur du stands whin dy iron staff wis i' my haand; bit it's little gratitude du shaws for my kindness, an' nae mair du sall hae at my haands. Dy days are numbered, wi' a' dy sins upo' dy guilty head; repent noo if du can, even at the elevent hour. Tink whaur du's gaen, an' dat da master du has served sae lang can gie dee nae better fare den he has ta himsell. Du sees dat streak o' licht i' da east sky, an' dat licht tells dee dat da glorious sun is followin' efter it, but du will never see his licht again. Before he glints ower the green girss o' Sumbro' Head, dy body will be stark an' stiff, an' dy püir soul in bitter torment, unless noo, at dy last moments, du cries for mercy."

"Fause cantin' villian," exclaimed the outlaw, foaming with rage, and his eyes gleaming with a lurid glare as if the horrors of perdition were already kindled with his soul; "curse dy preachin', I will preach dee sixty fathoms doon ower da banks dere, and see dee lowin' in heil, an' bricht enouch to shaw me da road afore I come!" With these words he advanced closer to where Sandy stood, and, before the latter could parry the stroke, the miscreant dealt him a savage blow across the face, and the blood trickled down his breast.

Like another Samson in the fields of Timnah when the young lion roared against him, the spirit came mightily upon Sandy, his blood was at last fairly up, and he felt a superhuman strength shoot through his giant frame. Rushing upon his assailant, his blows fell with the force and rapidity of two sledge hammers driven by steam, beating the retreating savage almost to the edge of the cliff, and whose sinewy frame seemed to quiver beneath the frightful thuds which were showered thick and fast upon him; but when within a few feet of the awful precipice, he suddenly threw himself flat upon the ground, and darting out his long gorilla, arms, he clutched Sandy by the feet, which brought him to the earth. The miscreant now sprang to his feet, and with a fiendish glare in his eyes, holding his victim by the legs, attempted to hurl him over the cliff. Sandy, having nothing to grasp, was dragged along the smooth grass, and just as Black Eric, with all the savage strength he could exert, bent back so as to swing Sandy fairly over the precipice, the latter, by a tremendous effort, dragged his left foot from his grasp, and struck him such a blow on the pit of the stomach as sent him rolling heels over head down the precipice. As he fell, Sandy held his breath, and listened with a sense of awful horror to hear a faint splash in the eddying waters far below; but no sound broke upon his ear, and rising to look over the cliff to ascertain the fate of the miserable wretch, he was almost horror-striken at the apparition which

glared upon him. A few feet from the top of the cliff, clinging to a fragment of rock, Black Eric was still safe; and, with a spring like a panther, vaulted again to his feet on the grass in front of his adversary, once more to renew the struggle.

The unexpected apearance of his enemy, and his bound from the rock he had clung to being quick as a flash of lightning, Sandy was for the moment off his guard, and before he could strike down the black, grizzly paw of his enemy, he felt his throat in his iron grasp. Almost suffocated, Sandy grasped the wrist of the savage, crushing flesh and bone, which loosened his grasp, and extorted from him a howl of agony. At the same moment, Sandy in turn grappled him by the throat, and they both rolled on the earth together. The injury Sandy had suffered in the dreadful conflict had steeled his heart with revenge, and though the wretch, now in his death grasp, twisted and quivered in the most frightful contortions, he relaxed not his hold. Black Eric's strength now began to fail, and his protruding tongue and glazing blood-shot eye-balls showed that the last moments of the sheepstealer were fast falling away, when suddenly a flash of light passed over Sandy's head, and looking up he saw a black horse galloping in a circle around him. Around the head of the animal was a halo of phosphoric light, and from his feet flew flashes of blue flame when they touched the earth. As Sandy's eye followed the circling course his speed grew faster, and as the children make a ring of fire with a burning stick, so did the dark form of the mysterious beast melt in the fiery ring. A strange dizziness now came over Sandy as the earth seemed to be flying around under him, and the luminous ring turned blue, then green, then black, and in its darkness he remembered no more.

How long he remained in this state he knew not, but on awakening he found himself resting on his side on the soft turf which around him bore marked traces of a dreadful struggle; but his enemy had vanished. Raising himself

on his elbow, his heart was gladdened by the glorious light of the sun now risen in the east, casting a ruddy glow over the surrounding landscape, and the dew-laden grass sparkled with countless shining gems as the slanting mellow rays shot athwart the verdant headland. Rising to his feet, he felt refreshed by the gentle morning breeze which fanned his cheeks and cooled his fevered brow; and the fierce passions of his soul, which had raged like a tempest during the awful midnight scene through which he had passed, now heard the gentle voice of Nature whispering, "Peace, be still." Like Samson, he felt that the Spirit of the Lord had not departed from him, for as he stretched forth his powerful arms and paced about in the warm sunlight, he felt his strength returning, and he thanked God for this, and for preserving him through such a conflict to see the light of day once more. The thought of his wife and children now shot through his heart like an arrow, and with a deep sigh, and a tear trickling down his manly cheek, he turned his face towards his cottage on the hill side.

Walking along the smooth, velvety carpet which Nature so richly spreads over those headlands, Sandy felt deeply impressed with a sense of God's goodness, in adorning the earth with so much beauty. Around him on every side grew myriads of wild flowers of every form and hue, giving out their sweet perfume in the balmy morning air, and reminding him of the beautiful language of Scripture, which he had so often read and admired—"Consider the lilies of the field how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If God so clothe the grass which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

Sandy felt that he was one of those of little faith, and he prayed that it might be strengthened, and that he might get a clearer view of the ways of Providence, which to his inquiring

mind had often suggested dark doubts and difficulties. "Why," said he to himself, "amid all this beauty, order, and harmony, should man be the only creature whose presence is so often a plague-spot upon the fair face of creation? and, even at his best, being 'made to mourn,' he mars the beauty of Nature with his tears.

"Over the edge of the cliff yonder, the gulls and kitty-wakes are sailing with outspread, snowy pinions on the gentle, morning breeze. How gracefully they float with motionless wings! circling in playful flight, and greeting each other with familiar cries as they pass. How happy they must be! no regrets for the past, no anticipation of evil to come; far below their aerial flight lies the great sea which they know gives them food, and safe on the ledge or in the fissure of the rock, dwells their callow brood, and beyond these objects they know no care and feel no sorrow.

"The lark, like a dark speck against yon silvery cloud, is warbling out a gushing flood of music. How clear and full it is, as if the sweet songster was just near at hand, and not so far away as to be almost lost in the distance; surely this bird is happy! Its joy is full in the knowledge that its little nest is safe on the earth below, and hidden, as it is, by a few tall blades of grass which grow beside it. There is a humble bee flitting from flower to flower, humming its droning tune of pleasure as it fills its honey-bag with the treasures of many a flower, and carries the day's gathering to its humble storehouse, there to be laid up and enjoyed when the drifting ocean spray, the howling tempest, and the snow drifts sweep over every verdant, flowery spot which now smiles with beauty in all the loveliness of a summer morn.

"Flowers, birds, and insects, no dark midnight scenes with you; no fierce conflicts in which you engage, no demon spirit dwells in you to make you a curse to the earth, and the terror and dread of your species. Alas! why then was I made

a man, and not a bird or an insect? for then would the brief span of my existence have been spent in joy, and no fierce passion would have raged in my breast, nor brought me in conflict with the powers of darkness manifested in man, accursed of God, and sold to the prince of the powers of darkness." Such were the musings that passed rapidly through Sandy's mind, as with hurried steps he took his way homeward. He felt a gloom resting on his soul, and the dark enigma of his being pressed more heavily on his spirits than ever it had done before. "What is the end and object of my life," inquired he; "does it begin and end here? Ah! that is the question; here is only the beginning, and the end is lost in the infinite. That is the reason I have sorrow, and trouble, and a knowledge of evil in this life, because those are the means by which I must be trained for the life to come. Yes, this is light shining in a dark place, and I thank God for it."

Sandy was now crossing the Vadle Brigg, and, turning to the left, quickly ascended the road to Scousburgh. Passing through the village, he came in sight of his cottage, and as he came near it he saw his wife emerge from the door with outstretched arms, and her loose hair floating in the breeze. He ran to meet her, and caught her in his arms, as with a wild shriek she exclaimed, "O my Sandy!" and would have fallen at his feet had he not supported her. Lifting her gently, as he would have done a child, he bore her into the cottage, and placing her in a chair, tried all the means he could use to bring her back to consciousness. His little boy, on whose sunny locks only three summers had shone, clung to his mother's skirt, and looking up to his father's face with his large, wondering, clear eyes suffused in tears, asked if "mam widna waaken." His little sister, two years younger, fair as a rosebud, and a sweet miniature of her mother, slid down from the chair which she was leaning against, and tried to creep to her mother, who, slightly recovering consciousness, looked with bewildered gaze

at her husband, as if to make sure that it was really him she saw. But happening to catch a glimpse of the blood which had stained his white trousers, she went off in a wild hysteric fit, her rapid sobs alarming the children and wringing Sandy's very heart with grief and alarm for her safety. Gradually getting calmer, Sandy tried by every endearing expression to soothe her.

"Annie! Annie!" exclaimed he, "be calm, love; I'm safe an' soond; du's frightenin' da bairns oot o' der senses. Dunna noo, dunna geng on dat wy; canna du see dat der's naethin' da matter wi' me; tak' up da bairn noo, an' haud dy tongue."

"O, cruel Sandy," at last sobbed his wife, "Why did du lave me? du's murdered; yea, I ken du's murdered, tho' du winna tell me."

"O, sic nonsense, Annie," said Sandy; "hoo can I be murdered, an' yet here beside dee, an' spaekin' ta dee?"

"Yea, yea, yea, yea!" continued Annie, in a low dolorous tone, and without noticing his last remark, "I kent somethin' wis gaen ta happen. Dis is my drame o' wirkin' i' green girss; an' da black corbie dat fled ower wir hoose da streen i' da mirkenin'."

"O! niver mind nedder drames or corbies, Annie, as lang as I'm safe an' weel," said Sandy, who at last succeeded in calming his wife.

For several days she tried to get from him where he had been, and what had happened; but he always put her off with the remark, "Dat it wisna o' ony consequence, an' he wid tell her a' aboot it sometime."

Several months passed, and the subject seemed to be forgotten, as Sandy was anxious it should be, especially as from the night of the conflict with Black Eric, none of Sandy's flock were missed. At the same time there was undoubted evidence that the sheepstealer was still alive, and visiting his old haunts, but with greater caution, and with a more sparing hand of his neighbour's property than formerly. A remarkable circum-

stance, however, occurred at the time, which seems to have entirely changed the mode of Black Eric's life, and which will be gathered from a conversation which took place between Jenny Pennon and Ellie o' da Hill.

Jenny was well known far and wide as a collector and vendor of all sorts of gossip—good, bad, and indifferent ; and one day calling on Ellie, who was an old maid, and lived alone in a small cottage outside the hill dykes, she found the latter at home. Coming in softly over the floor, in a quiet undertone she announced her appearance with "Gude day be here."

"Gude day be ta you," returned Ellie. "O!" recognising her, "is dis dee, Jenny? Come in trow; surely dat's a stranger. Tak a share, an' slip aff o' dy feet an' set dem up ta da fire."

"Na, mony tanks ta dee," responded Jenny; "bit niver du anse my feet, fir I'm shure der ower weel ; na, no a grain o' weet is upo' dem," she added, as she drew her hand over the tops of her neatly-clipt rivelins.

"Fu's a' hame wi' dee," inquired Ellie ; "nae unkin news aboot you, I'se warren."

"Yea, alaek ! der's been a hantle o' unkin news dis while. Du'll be heard o' Sandy Breamer's feicht wi' Black Eric o' Fitful?"

"I!" exclaimed Ellie, "no a whist am I heard ; du sees I geng nae wy ta hear news."

"Weel," continued Jenny, "dey say it wis a awful feicht. Sandy wrastled wi' him da whole nicht, an' da tief wid niver hae gotten oot o's hands leevin' if Tangie hed na come an' pitten some glamour ower Sandy, an' taen his strent fae him. Bit Lord be tanked if a' be true dat's sed, da foul fiend is oot o' Shetlan', an' niver micht his feet tak him back agen, an' du an' I be hale an' weel. Du wid a kent Rasmie i' da Stanes, da fiddler? Weel, as a' body kens, he wis aye taen awa every Yule-e'en ta play ta da hill-folk, an' sometimes tü whin dey hed a weddin'. He aye slipped awa' i' da mirknin', wanderin' among da muckle grey stanes an' ferrie knowes

aboon his hoose; an' if dis wis aboot da middle o' da ouk he widna be seen agen till da Monaday efter, an' den he wis aye fun staandin' afore a muckle grey stane wi' his fiddle anunder his airm, perfectly benumbed. Weel, as I wis gaen ta tell dee, aboot twa ouks sinsyne, Rasmie guid awa' ta ane o' da ferrie knowes ta see what hed cum ower dem, as he never hed heard o' a weddin' for iver sae lang afore dat. Weel, whin he comes in, wha sees he bit an auld wife sitting' hurklin' upo' da heartstane. Says Rasmie, says he, 'Fu's a' wi' you, an' fu's a' da rest?' 'O, dool an' sorro'! dool an' sorro'!' says shü; 'I'm a' dat's left noo, lammit, i' da Isles o' Shetlan' o' wir kind. Wir folk is a' fled to Faroe, an' dey tocht dat I wis dat auld an' dat cripple dat dere wis nae üse o' me followin dem.' 'An what's pitten dem awa?' says Rasmie. 'O!' says da auld wife, 'da Gospel hes spread sae muckle dis while back dat dey cudna bide ony langer in Shetlan'. An' sae, Rasmie,' says shü, 'ye see a blate fireside noo whaur mony a happy yule-e'en ye're seen spent. O, dool an' sorro'! dool an' sorro'! dat ever I sud a lived ta see dis day.'"

"O haud dy tongue noo, Jenny, an' say nae mair," exclaimed Ellie, looking furtively over the back of her chair towards the dark end of her hut,—"du'll pit me clean oot o' my judgment wi' faer, du's made me perfectly oorie."

"Na! Lord hae da poor o' dee," ejaculated Jenny, "an' a' dat belangs ta dee; an' Lord be my blest helper (sneezing), der's naething ta mak dee oorie. As I wis sayin', Rasmie fan dat a' da hill folk hed left Shetlan' an' gean ta Faroe, an' mony says dat baith Brownie an' Tangie hes followed dem. Tangie hesna been seen fir monts, and sin Gaawn o' da Blate left da claes i' da mill fir Brownie, he's never been seen sinsyne. As mony a ane says, he sud a been mair spairin' o' his gifts, an' geen da claes ta dem dat hed mair need."

The demon Brownie here alluded to, and who scarcely deserves the bad-sounding prefix to his name, was a useful, if

not an amiable, member of the fraternity to which he belonged. His mission was to attend water mills during the night; and before the invention of the hopper, he supplied the eye of the upper millstone with the corn, so all that was necessary for any one having corn to grind was to leave it in the mill, shut the door, and lift up the water-sluice to set the mill in motion. In the morning the corn was found ground, and the meal ready for being carried home. Those who chanced to get a sight of Brownie describe him as having the appearance of a tall young lad, but always in a state of nudity; hence the good-natured Gaawn, alluded to by Jenny Pennon, took pity on him and left him a suit of clothes one night, along with the quantity of corn to be ground; but, as the sequel showed, it turned out to be a case of ill-judged philanthropy, resulting in the loss of Brownie's services ever after.

Tangie, as it will have been seen, had left the islands. This was evident, not only from the discovery made by Rasmie o' the Stanes, but the blue lights in Fitful banks, so long seen by the fishing boats, had entirely disappeared, and Black Eric, deprived of his demon horse, could no longer reach his rocky cave, and therefore had to content himself with less comfortable and less safe quarters. Sometimes hiding in the more accessible parts of the cliff, and sometimes sleeping in the open air, he seems to have led a more unsettled kind of life since his escape from the hands of Sandy Breamer; but at last the Fates decreed that the wicked and singular life of the bold outlaw of Fitful Head should be brought to a close, and in a way that, while it served the ends of justice, avoided the dangerous and painful necessity of personal conflict.

The autumn had far advanced, and the horses employed in bringing home the winter-fuel from the hills during the summer months were now allowed to run at large over the green slopes of Fitful, and to improve their condition by feeding on its rich grass. Sandy Breamer owned a splendid animal,

a cross between the Arabian and pure Shetland breed, and going one morning at early dawn to bring home this horse, for the purpose of "leading" home hay from the meadows, he met with a strange adventure, by which he at last accomplished that great object of his life—viz., the capture of Black Eric.

Finding the animal grazing quietly on the eastern slope of the headland, Sandy mounted on his back, and, taking a northerly course, moved along at an easy trot, keeping at a short distance from the edge of the cliff. When within a short distance of the memorable scene of his former conflict, what was his amazement to see, in a hollow just before him, his old enemy Black Eric, lying at full length, apparently in a deep slumber, with the veritable iron staff as a pillow, which Sandy had long believed was resting beneath the deep waters which washed the dark, frowning rocks of Fitful Head. Black Eric lay with his cap drawn down over his eyes, his arms folded across his face, and his knees slightly drawn up. Gazing in breathless silence on the prostrate figure now before him, Sandy could scarcely believe his eyes. Cautiously dismounting, and taking his horse by the head, he moved with noiseless steps over the soft mossy turf which yielded like feathers beneath the horse's hoofs. In a moment he stood at Black Eric's feet, and uncoiling a strong rope tether which he carried in his hand, he deftly passed the end under the legs of his captive, and casting a running noose, fixed the other end of the rope around his own waist. He now sprang on his horse, and bending forward, firmly grasped the neck of the animal (for he had no saddle), and whispering, "Check, check, check," in his ear, he bounded like an arrow down the declivity. The moment the rope tightened around Black Eric's ankles, he awakened and sprang to his feet with a savage growl; but as the horse sprang forward he was instantly tripped, coming to the earth with a frightful thud. Again and again, as he glided over the smooth turf with almost lightening speed, he bounded from the earth, vainly

attempting to clutch the streaming tail of the flying animal; but ere his curved fingers could grasp it he was brought down with terrific force, and each time as he fell a tempest of curses and imprecations were hurled at his flying captor. Sandy, however, heeded not, but urged the animal to his utmost speed, and, directing his course towards the Vadle Brigg, soon saw a number of fishermen, who were on their way to the beach, coming running to meet him. Being now on the sandy plat which fringes the western shore of the loch, and just as the men met him, he leaped from his horse, and Black Eric was instantly surrounded.

"God be praised!" exclaimed Eddie o' Clavel, who had suffered much by the depredations of the sheepstealer; "du's catched da tief at last, Sandy. Noo haud 'im fast, men, or Tangie may help 'im tae gie you da slip ance mair yet."

Black Eric now seeing that all resistance was hopeless, passively allowed his arms to be pinioned behind his back. He uttered not a word, but looked with a sullen, savage scowl on those around him.

"We'll tak' 'em ta da büth, boys," said Eddie o' Clavel; "an' Lowrie o' Lumpfield, du an' I'll watch 'em a' nicht; an' Sandy geng du hame ta dy hoose, du's hed enouch ta dü already wi' da ill-faured tief."

On reaching the booth, which stood near the fishing station of Spiggie, the two fishermen entered with their captive, intending to man a boat next day and convey him to Lerwick for the purpose of lodging him in the Tolbooth prison.

Sandy again mounted his horse and rode back to the spot where he had captured Black Eric, for the purpose of securing his iron staff, which he wished to keep in his possession as a trophy. Arriving at the spot, he found the mysterious weapon where he left it, and dismounting, he threw it over his shoulder, and, taking his horse by the bridle, again descended the slope on his way to his cottage on the hill-side.

Eddie o' Clavel and Lowrie o' Lumpfield kept watchful guard over their prisoner. Being two powerful men, they had no fear of him bound as he was, and they had still less fear of his escape, seeing that the door of the booth was locked on the inside, and he placed on a bench between them. As the day advanced, Black Eric appeared more crest-fallen, and bitterly complained of the cords, which he said were too tightly seized round his wrists.

"We micht aise da tow," said Eddie, "bit wha kens what micht happen, du's sic a foul tief dat we canna trust dee."

"Trust me!" echoed Black Eric, in a whining tone; "ye cruel monsters, is na da door locked? an' gif my haands were loose a'tagedder, I can get nae farder."

"I tink, boy, we micht slacken 'em a bit," said Lowrie o' Lumpfield.

"Weel, boy, just plase dysel," replied Eddie..

Lowrie now proceeded to undo the knot of the cord that bound Black Eric's hands, taking the precaution, however, not to slip out the ends, but merely to slacken it a little; but while accomplishing this, the wily outlaw suddenly drew his hands through the cord, and dashing from his keepers, went through the door like a bomb-shell, making it fly in fragments before him—the door being an old and frail one—and this he had noticed on entering. Before Eddie or Lowrie could recover from their surprise, Black Eric was several yards in advance of them, taking a southerly direction, and then toiling up the heights to his old haunts. His pursuers strained every nerve to make up with him, but his long practice on the hills in running down sheep now stood him in good stead. By the time he gained the edge of the cliff, he had left his pursuers at least fifty yards behind him. They saw him disappear over the brow of the banks, but at a point where they knew he could find little shelter, and they therefore strove hard to reach the cliff, before he could gain the next gio, where the nature of the rock

would have afforded him a better chance for baffling his pursuers, for at this part of the headland the cliff is not perpendicular as is the case further south, but is broken up into gios or creeks, which have shelving slopes of loose rock running midway to the sea. As they anticipated, just as they gained the head of the gio into which Black Eric descended, he was attempting to swing himself round a dangerously projecting rock which jutted out in a point between the two gios or creeks already spoken of, and, excepting a few narrow ledges, formed a sheer descent of several hundred feet. When the men saw him, they yelled a wild "hey!" which echoed through the surrounding cliffs; and whether by this means he was startled, or had the fatigue he had gone through shaken his nerves and weakened the tenacity of his hold, could not be known; but, horrible to relate, as he made the desperate swing, clinging to the ledge with both hands, and his right foot resting on a narrow ledge below, his foot slipped and he fell. As his hands slipped, he seemed to bound from the face of the rock, and with extended arms, down, down he went! his dark form lessening to the sight of the appalled fishermen as it sped in its awful flight to the dark waters below. They see it plunge, a tiny jet of spray mounts up, falls, and settles in a small spot of frothy bubbles which soon vanish. The eddying waters gurgle a low, murmuring requiem, and the water sprite dances with fiendish glee over the spot where lies fifty fathoms deep the stiffened corse of Black Eric the sheepstealer.

"Dis is da Lord's düin'," exclaimed Eddie o' Clavel, as he smote his hands together; "his blüid be on his ain head, an' da Lord hae mercy on his soul, tho' Lord forgie me for sayin' it, for dat prayer is noo ower late. Lat's geng hame, Lowrie, an' tell what's happened."

The two men now descended the headland, and arriving at the village of Scousburgh, told the startling news that Black Eric had fallen over the banks, which seemed to produce a

mingled feeling of horror and thankfulness in the minds of the community—horror at the awful termination of the life of this wicked man, and thankfulness that the peace of the district would no more be disturbed by his presence, nor its interests suffer by his depredations.

Years rolled on, and the sheepstealer of Fitful Head seemed to be almost forgotten, and his iron staff rested quietly, with a thick coat of rust on it, in an obscure corner of Sandy Breamer's cottage. About this time, however, a water-mill owned by Sandy required to undergo some repairs, and among other things required a new iron spindle ; but the village smith had not a piece of iron suitable for the purpose, and in the dilemma, Sandy bethought him of the useless trophy still in his possession, and that it could not be applied to a better purpose than to make a spindle for the mill. It was therefore at once handed to the smith, who with little workmanship made it serve a more useful purpose than ever it had done before.

The mill was finished and set a-going, and it so happened to be on a Halloween. All went well till the moon shown over a point on Trosswickness, which showed that it was twelve o'clock, when all of a sudden a noise like that of thunder passed over the roof of the mill, and was quickly followed by low, moaning sounds, and the "collie" which lighted the mill instantly went out, and in the darkness the awful apparition of Black Eric was seen standing upon the top of the flying mill-stone with his finger pointing to the iron spindle below. Olly o' Vinsgart and his son, who had the use of the mill that night, fled in terror through the open door, and for several days remained speechless and in a state of stupefaction.

None after this occurrence ever again had the courage to visit the mill. It long remained deserted—at last fell into ruins, and a heap of lichened stones is all that now remains as a memento of Black Eric of Fitful Head.

CHAPTER XVI.

Nae doubt but ye may get a sight,
Great cause ye hae ta fear it,
For mony a ane has gotten a fright,
And lived and died deleerit
On sic a night.—BURNS.

"DAT's baith a lang, an' a winderful tale," said Bawby, as Maikie closed his book and resumed his seat; "bit I'm tinkin' some o' da lasses 'll be wearyin' noo ta get der fortins cassen, an' sae we'll better hae dis ower afore da boys begins wi' castin' der stocks."

"Noo, Bawby, I hoop ye're no gaen ta dü ony fearsome thing," cried Girzie o' Glufftoon; "it aye maks me feared ta hear aboot tellin' fortins. Sin dat time dat some lasses got sic an awful fricht. It wis upon a Halloween dey hed dipped der sark sleeves in a burn, whaur tree lairds' land met, an' den dey tüik dem hame wi' dem an hang dem upo' backs o' tree shares afore da fire, an' den hoided demsells awa at da ooter end o' da hoose, ta see da lads dey wir ta be married til; fir as ye ken, da foregeng o' every lass's lad wis expected ta come an' turn his sweetheart's sark dat wis upo' da back o' da share.

"Weel, first comes in ae bonnie lad, an' he turns a sark; bit den comes in anidder bonnie lad; an' he turns da second sark, bit instead o' a third bonnie lad dere cam tumlin' in da door—O it maks me quaak ta speak o' it! a black coffin, an' it tumled an' tumled till it cam ta da share whare da sark wisna turned, whin it stüd a peerie while on its end, an' den tumled an' tumled awa oot da door agen da sam wy it cam in. Twa o' da lasses fell a soond, an' da idder ane screeched dat wy dat da folk o' da hoose jimped oot o' der beds, fir dey wir a' gaen ta bed, an' ran ta da lass an' held her, fir shü hed

gaen i' da fits; sae in a while dey a' tree cam ta demsells, bit twa o' dem wis no da better o' it a' der days, an da third ane dat hed her sark upo' da share, whaur da coffin güid til, wis in her grave afore da neist Halloween cam roond."

"O Girzzie!" exclaimed Bawby, "du's aye tinkin' aboot some fearsome thing; bit we're no gaen ta dü ony thing dat wy; we're just gaen ta set straes i' da ase, an' drap da white o' a egg in a gless o' water; an' whin da lasses comes hame, dey can fling der clews doon da kill head, an say, "Wha haads i' my clew end.' Bit, bairns, dere's a gaist," continued Bawby, pointing to a half consumed brand standing upright on the hearth, "wha can dis be, I winder? O, I'll wager you it's Auld Sibbie Rendal; weel I keen sorra bit o' her I'm wantin' ta see. Lord bliss dee, Eppie, as du's neist da door, an' gie her a dip i' da water dat's i' da tub yonder upo' da flüir."

"Yae, dat sall I," said Eppie Jarmson, as she rose and took the representative of the unwelcome Sibbie in the tongs and dipped it in the tub of water, so that the original might get a thorough drenching of rain when she set out on her visit to Bawby o' Briggstanes.

"Noo, bairns, wha will we try first," continued Bawby, as she took a straw from the floor and nipped in two pieces about an inch and a half in length, one being plain, the other having a knot on it. "Dis is Sandy Flaws," she whispered in Johnnie o' Greentaft's ear, as she stuck the piece with the knot on it in the hot embers; "an dis is Leezie Lowrie," she whispered again, as she stuck the plain straw beside it. The effect of the heat on the lower ends of the straw was to give them a wavering motion, first parting and then coming close together again, and at last resting against each other; this was caused by the lower ends of the straw being burned through, when no further motion took place. As soon as the two straws thus closed, loud laughter and clapping of hands broke from the whole circle of lads and lasses around the fire.

"Ay, Bawby!" exclaimed Sandy Flaws, "dat pair is a' richt; dat's just da wy you dü your wark, Bawby, if dey quarrel ye ken hoo ta get dem tagedder agen."

"Yea! yea!" cried Bawby, "du's richt, my bairn. Bawby o' Briggstanes niver leaves her wark half düne; ony twa shü pits tagedder needna be feared, peace an' plenty will be der lot, as da sang sings, an' a' dat's gude watch ower dem; bit du niver kens," she continued, "dis pair wis just dy ain sell an' some bodie no far awa, sae du sees hoo it's gaen ta be."

"O mony tanks ta you," said Sandy; "I hoop ye'll be richt, an' den ye sall get da bride's piece, an' nane better wirt it, I'm shüre."

"Ay, Lord bless dee," exclaimed Bawby; "bit, bairns," she continued, "wha sall we try neist? O I ken, bit I'll no tell ony body dis time," she added, as she bent down to place a straw with the knot on it in the embers; but just as she got this representative of a love-sick swain, only known to herself, placed in the proper position, down came from the lum a heavy kail[1] stock, which, guided by the laws of gravitation, landed right on the middle of Bawby's black binder.

"O my Lord! I'm soved,"[2] she exclaimed, as she settled back in a fainting fit.

"Hes ony o' you a scent bottle?" cried Johnnie o' Greentaft, as he lifted Bawby gently up into her chair.

"Aye, here's ane," cried Girzzie Güllet, as she held the restorative to Bawby's nose; "an' sprinkle dis watter on her broos," cried Willie Biggiltie, as he held a "tinnie" of the liquid to Johnnie o' Greentaft, who acted as medical attendant.

"Rin fort, boys," cried Johnnie, "an gie dat vagabonds a trashin' if ye can catch ony o' dem."

Bawby, though seriously stunned, still retained the faculty of hearing, and this declaration of war against the stock casters made her gently open up her eyes, when, seeing a very large

[1] A whole cabbage. [2] Stunned.

heap of the produce of the kail-yard lying around the fire, she gradually revived, and faintly whispered, "O püir bairns, let dem be, bairns will be bairns, an dey wirna ta ken dat da runt wis ta strick me, ye ken. Yea, I'm a peerie corn better noo, she added, as she settled herself back in her chair, and adjusted her widow's cap, the beauty and symmetry of which had been seriously marred by the *cabbaging* process through which it had passed. "Noo, bairns," she continued, "I'm just pittin' you a' aboot, sae gadder ye up da twa or tree peags o' kail, an' lay dem üdbe[1] aside da lambs, an' set up da fire agen, fir ye're no gaen to loss your fun, idder fir me or da boys."

"Weel, Bawby," said Annie Leslie, "I truly tink ye're no able fir muckle mair dis nicht, an' ye ken we can dü naithen withoot you; besides Geordie here wis oot a perrie meenit sin syne, an' he says da wind is takin' up at da south-east wi' da awful gloweret laek sky; sae I'm feared it's gaen ta be a ill nicht, an' sae I tink we'll a' just mak fir hame afore it comes on warse, an' some o' 'is has far ta geng, ye ken; an' da rods is dark noo whin dere's nae mün-licht."

"Weel, weel, my bairn," said Bawby, "if da wadder is gaen ta tak up I'll no bid you bide langer da nicht, as weel as mebbe da boys is no düne wi' das tocks yet; sae we widna hae muckle mair paece. Lord bliss a' your happy faces, fir comin' ta see me da nicht, an' I hoop ye'll no be lang in being back agen; bit a' ye dat needs a brand 'll hae ta wait a peerie start fir it taks, ye ken."

When Bawby had finished her remarks, considerable bustle ensued amongst the lads and lasses, some lighting lanterns, others seeking on the floor for missing clogs, and getting them adjusted to the feet to which they belonged; and those not provided with lanterns seeking in the peat cro[2] for the proper length and quality of mossy peats suitable for

[1] The outer end of the house. [2] Corner where peats are kept.

torches. Those provided with lanterns then took their departure, while the torch-bearers had to wait until their peats had become sufficiently ignited to form a very effective flambeau when fanned by a strong breeze. When the last of Bawby's visitors had departed, she shut the door, and settled herself down in her comfortable straen chair, to wait further blessings being showered upon her from that horn of plenty commonly called the lum. In this anticipation she was not disappointed, for several of the lads who had just left, immediately returned to Brigstanes with as large a load of Halloween vegetable offerings as they could carry, and which was safely deposited through the smoke aperture of Bawby's cottage, until a very neat little stack of provender accumulated at the side of the "peat cro." Next day Bawby, with careful hand, planted these in a crub which stood near the cottage, in order to keep them fresh until required, either for provender or domestic use.

CHAPTER XVII.

A life on the ocean wave,
A home on the rolling deep.

In the last chapter we left Bawby of Brigstanes rejoicing over her bountiful kail harvest; and this she did notwithstanding the shock which her cranium had sustained by the first descent of the green manna, as already recorded; and we must now introduce the reader to an individual with whom he has had already some slight acquaintance, and who plays no unimportant part in the curious chapter of the incidents of our story. This individual is no less a personage than the hermit's old rival, Jack Smith of Mirends. Jack was an orphan, and lived with an uncle on the mother's side, but from his earliest years he was a wild, daring lad, fond of performing desperate and fool-hardy feats, one of which may be recorded.

In the neighbourhood of the village where he was brought up was a cliff several hundred feet in height, and quite perpendicular. The strata of the rock were marked off in layers of great depth by horizontal fissures running in parallel lines across its face, and giving it the appearance of some great wall constructed by Titanic hands. In the cliff the gull, kittywake, and shag bred in vast numbers; its inaccessibility guarding them from the intrusion of man, and its deep fissures forming a safe and convenient resting-place for hatching their young.

Upon this impregnable fortress of the feathered tribe Jack had often cast a longing look, but to reach one of its fissures and carry off the coveted booty of eggs or half-fledged young, would have required as great powers of flight as those possessed by the feathered owners themselves. But though he had not

wings, he found a substitute in a pony's tether, which he one quiet evening possessed himself of, and, proceeding to the top of the cliff, drove the stake firmly into the turf near the edge of the precipice, and putting the running noose at the other end of the rope round his waist, cautiously began the perilous descent. Clinging to the face of the rock by fixing his toes and fingers in its narrow crevices, he had nearly reached a gull's nest when his foot slipped, and he fell head downwards. Providentially, the rope stood the sudden strain put upon it, and the stake kept its hold in the earth, but Jack hung suspended in mid-air head downwards, with the rope drawn so tight around his waist as to cause him the greatest agony. Away from the sight of every human eye, and from the hearing of every human ear, there he hung for many hours, until at last a young woman, happening to pass along the road which skirted the cliffs, was startled and surprised to hear cries for help proceed from one of the creeks ; but being unable to see the face of the rock from the spot where she stood, she ran to the other side of the "gio," and there saw on the opposite side what in the distance appeared like a spider suspended by a single thread of his web. Hastening to the spot, she, with marvellous courage, and such as an islander was alone capable of, seized hold of the rope, and standing on the verge of the precipice pulled him up by sheer force, and when safely brought to bank, she exhibited what might be considered a suitable expression to her feelings by giving him the rope's end round his ears ; but so little impression did this adventure make upon our young cragsman that he returned to the same spot the following week, and, with a stronger rope and more caution, effectually harried the nest which was the cause of his first mishap.[1] To such reckless daring he added a certain cruelty of disposition, evinced by his love of dog and cock fighting, hanging and drowning

[1] The original of Jack Smith was a school companion of the author, who went through the same perilous adventure, and was rescued in the same way as here described.

dogs and cats, and following other juvenile sanguinary amusements.

As might be expected, a youth with such proclivities was not likely to settle down to the quiet and unromantic life of a croftholder, or the more toilsome drudgery of the Haaf fishing. He longed for a field more congenial to his tastes, and one which should afford that excitement and wild adventure which were better suited to his nature; and no Paul Jones could have desired a better field than that which the smuggling trade on the coast of Shetland afforded at this time.

This trade was chiefly carried on by Dutch vessels manned by Dutch sailors, who were sufficiently familiar with the coast by annually visiting it when prosecuting the herring fishing, as the regular smugglers seldom appeared on the coast until after these fishing "busses" had returned home, and when picked men could easily be obtained. Jack's uncle was a noted smuggler and dealer in contraband goods, which chiefly consisted of gin and tobacco, and was assisted by his nephew in all his daring exploits when landing his illicit commodities at places and in weather which it required the most fearless intrepidity and skill to accomplish; and thus young Jack's tastes were formed, and the way opened up for his future career as a bold and successful smuggler.

As will be remembered, Jack when a schoolboy was smitten by the charms of Lelah Halcro (his ignominious defeat by the hero of our tale, on the occasion of the bloody conflict in which they engaged on her account, was never entirely forgotten or forgiven by him); and it is therefore not too much to say that from that time a secret determination of revenge was formed in his mind, and a hope at least entertained that what could be gained by the influence of love might one day be secured by force.

On a quiet evening, in the month of August 1744, a gaily painted vessel with gaudy pennants, high poop, and large

square sail, was seen to heave-to close in with the land, and send a boat ashore to one of the creeks called Voe, and which still bears that name, On approaching the shore a number of green-painted casks was observed in the boat, which indicated that a supply of water was the only apparent object the boat had in visiting the shore.

While the sailors were engaged in filling the water casks, there approached them a lad about seventeen years of age, of fair ruddy complexion, strongly built, and wearing a compromise in dress between that of a sailor and a landsman.

"Fadder," inquired the new comer, addressing the officer in command, "you want de youngus on board ship?" "Yah! yah!" responded the party addressed, and he shifted a quid of tobacco from right to left in his mouth; "you come board and spraach de captain—moy skip, plentach grout, Steekabrod, schnaps and tabac."

Our friend Jack (for he it was who now appeared on the scene) required no such flattering description of the ship and her liberal supply of stores to induce him to come on board. He longed to stand on her polished decks, and to see her gaudy pennants floating over his head, and to realise the pleasures of

> "A life on the ocean wave,
> A home on the rolling deep."

He therefore sprang on board the boat as she moved from the jetty, seized an oar, and pulled lustily for the ship. As the boat came alongside, a number of swarthy faces peered over the taffrail at the young stranger, as he trimmed his oar and looked up at his future companions. "Wer ist das?" bawled the skipper through a cloud of smoke which he blew from the recesses of his capacious cheeks, as he held his long-stalked pipe in his right hand, and waited for a reply.

"De youngus hat lüst in de skip kommen," replied the man, mounting the ladder which hung down the ship's side.

"Yah! yah!" responded the skipper, nodding his head and taking a vigorous draw at his long pipe, as he eyed Jack's agile movements, springing up the ladder like a monkey.

The exchange of a few sentences between the captain and the commander of the boat seemed to satisfy the former that he had made a very important addition to his crew, in the person of the young native and already half-made sailor, who had now entered his service. Jack's intimate knowledge of the coast, his experience in the smuggling trade, and his ability to act as interpreter, when dealing with the natives on the west side of the mainland, where the Dutch language was very little understood—all rendered his services of the highest importance in the interests of the trade in which he was about to engage. A few weeks on board the "Bockanier," and Jack appeared to be every inch a sailor, his knowledge of the language enabling him to obey orders with the greatest alacrity, and his fearless daring making him quite at home on a yard arm, or in running along the shrouds, as a spider runs along the threads of her web.

On the "Bockanier" returning to the coast with a full cargo of gin and tobacco, Smith boldly piloted the smuggler along the western coast, as far as the island of Trondra, and thus not only avoided the chance of legal interference, feeble as it was, but found a far better market with those remote natives who, even at the high price asked, had never bought so cheap before. As might be expected, Jack came into high favour both with skipper and owners, and in four years from the time of his giving his friends the slip for the wild life of a smuggler, he stood on the deck of the "Bockanier" of Overflackkee as chief mate.

Up to this time, he had never ventured on shore when cruising off any part of the coast between Sumburgh Head and Lerwick, as he had no wish to be recognised by any one who had formerly known him; but now his appearance was so

much altered, while he spoke the language so fluently, and was so thoroughly Dutch, both in build and rig, that even his own mother, had she been alive, could scarcely have recognised him. Thus safe from recognition, he omitted no opportunity of visiting the scenes of his boyhood whenever the vessel lay off that part of the coast, and his anxiety to do so mainly arose from a lingering desire once more to get a glimpse of the maturer charms of his schoolmate, Lelah Halcro.

As unkind fate decreed it, this opportunity did occur, and produced results of the most momentous kind in the lives of those who innocently suffered the consequence of his ill-timed curiosity.

CHAPTER XVIII.

O ! mischief, thou art swift
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men.
SHAKESPEARE.

IN the month of July 1750, on "Meadow-mawin' day," a party of Dutch sailors were seen approaching by a road which led from the creek of Voe, and then, turning to the left, directed their course to the marshy plat, or meadow land, which lies at the bottom of the valley, between Sklaburg and Brew; for here was a gay gathering seen only on "Meadow-mawin' days." The mowers, in home-spun blue knee-breeches, red vests, and knitted caps of the same colour, were gracefully handling their scythes, as they stood erect, and swept, in wide circular swathes, their sharp shining blades through the tall rank grass; while buxom and blooming lasses, in short petticoats, white or coloured slugs,[1] fixed with a single pin at the waist, were actively plying the rake in gathering the hay into ricks, or loading the ponies with it to be carried into the toon[2] mails, where it was to be spread out for winning.

The sharp ring of the whitling stone on the scythe-blades, the merry laughter of the lasses at their work, the general hum of voices, and the shrill whistle of the pony drivers, all combined to form a chorus of music sweet enough to charm even the heart of a Dutchman.

"Goodendach," said the foremost of the party, as he approached a merry group of lasses busy with their rakes amongst the new-mown grass.

"Goodendach, faader," replied an active, middle-aged

[1] Short gowns.

[2] Commons.

female, whose air of responsibility indicated that she was directing the work.

"All de moy meshies bein here?" inquired the Dutchman, as he anxiously glanced around at the haymakers. "Nay, one more meshie come dere," said the spokeswoman, as she pointed to a girl approaching with a rake on her shoulder.

"Ah yah, mine Gott!" exclaimed the Dutchman, as he started, and the blood rushed to his cheeks, and then back again to his heart.

"Come here, Lelah; here's dy sweetheart waitin' ta see dee," said one of the girls laughing. Ah! thoughtless girl! how little did she know that her language was well understood by the swarthy-looking, heavy-built Dutchman, with jewelled ears and fingers, who now stood before her, and that her jest was indeed a terrible reality! He was a sweetheart, and none other than Jack Smith of Mirends, the school companion and discarded lover of Lelah Halcro; and it was her presence which thrilled his frame, and drew from him the exclamation which he uttered on seeing her.

Now in the full bloom of womanhood, perfect as a Grecian statue, the glance of her matchless eyes, so full of soft liquid beauty, sent the fatal shaft again home to his heart, and the strong man reeled beneath the shock.

The die for evil was cast, and days of darkness and trouble were stored up in the future.

The apparent Dutchman, however, quickly recovered himself, and pointing towards the mowers, he exclaimed, "Ver moy! ver moy! de same in my countrie, peoples bein ver happy dese times." With this he turned on his heel, and with a parting "goodendach" repeated by each of the party, the heavy *clamp* of their wooden shoes soon died away in the distance, as they returned by the same road to join their boat. which waited for them at the head of the Voe.

"I winder what yon Hollonders wir wantin?" said Janet

Wirk, as she resumed her rake, and began to pile up a cole of the new cut grass.

"Lord kens," replied Meggie Mowat, resting on her rake; "yon wid be da skipper, I'm tinkin', dat spak ta Eppie—da ane wi' da rings in his lugs, an' dat had da better kind o' claes on."

"Yea, I'se warren dee yon wid be da skipper," replied her companion; "I wiss I hed minded ta ax him for sweeticooks; I tink he wid a gean wis some. Did ye no notice, bairns, what a change cam ower his face whin he saw Lclah Halcro comin? What wid ye say dat yon's mebbe Johnny Smith dat guid awa wi' da smugglers a lock a years sin syne?"

"Hie tongue, lass, an' be na a füle," replied Eppie Gordie; "he's nae mair Johnny Smith den I am. Lord pity dee, lass, da man cudna spaek a wird o' plain English, far less Shetland! Na, na, da wicked sinner dat he wis, I doot he made a warr end."

The opinion formed by the haymakers that the supposed Dutchman was a skipper, was a correct one, for Jack Smith now owned no superior on board the "Bockanier," and as fate sometimes decrees that one man's misfortune shall be another man's good luck, so it was in this case; for when on a voyage to the Shetland coast the previous season, the "Bockanier" was caught in one of those south-east gales which sometimes sweep the German Ocean, and barely escaped foundering, with the loss of her bulwarks and lower spars, and two hands, with the captain, were washed overboard. This occurred while the vessel was lying-to between Sumburgh Head and Fair Isle. Jack then as next superior officer, assumed the command; and when the gale moderated, he bore up for the west coast of Shetland, and running into Scalloway, got his vessel refitted, and then in a cruise among the islands he disposed of his cargo on highly advantageous terms.

On his return to Holland, as might be expected, he

met with a cordial reception from the owners of the "Bokanier," and was confirmed in the command of that vessel.

A few days after the vessel's arrival at Overflakkee, Captain Smith left his ship in charge of one of the owners, in order that he might visit the late captain's widow, to convey the mournful intelligence of her husband's death. She lived with an only daughter, in a small chateau on the banks of the Waal, a few miles above the town of Bummel, and was a woman of great personal attractions, and amiable qualities of mind.

Just before starting on his sad errand, the captain was fortunate enough to meet with a countryman of his own, one Bill Ericson, a native of Lerwick, who had served several years in the Dutch trade as mate; and now being out of a ship, had come to Overflakkee on a sort of "Jack-ashore" trip. Bill had been highly educated, according to the standard of education of those times, and began his career in the medical profession; but disliking further acquaintance with the healing art than that which a ship's medicine-chest afforded, he quickly performed the operation of cutting his studies short and going to sea. The captain being in want of a mate, and knowing the cut of Bill's jib that he was the right sort of craft, engaged him at once. The long boat was then lowered, and the captain, with Bill and three other seaman, sprang on board, and the sail being hoisted, she was soon gliding up the smooth waters of the Maas.

On the arrival at the house of Frau Vanderboor, she received with becoming sorrow the sad intelligence which her visitors brought, but she did not on that account neglect the duties of hospitality; and on the captain taking his leave, he fancied the cordial grasp she gave his hand indicated that he might safely repeat his visit at some other time, without being considered an intruder.

"My eye, captain," said Bill, after they had got into the boat; "thereaway is a nice anchorage. It cheats Bill if that

tidy little Dutch craft won't haul down the black flag, whenever she has got true blue to hoist. Throw her a tow-line, and haul taut under her quarter, full sail, studsails alow and aloft, all sea dimples and sunshine;" and Bill winked and chuckled at the figure which his own fancy had conjured up.

"Avast there, Bill," cried the captain; "I ain't goin' athwart the hawse of that here frigrate. I have my weather-eye open in the wake of a nice leetle craft, west-nowd-west. Bearings 60 north and 1.20 west; and when I next take soundings thereaway, shiver my timbers if I don't have a survey."

"Ay! ay! captain," replied Bill, "all right, but belay there a jiffy; what if the skipper and owner all in one be aboard? mebbe he'll port helm hard, and run to windward, and then"—and Bill struck the side of his nose with his forefinger.

"Clap a stopper in that jaw tackle of yours, Bill," said the captain, not quite liking Bill's familiar manner, and still less the unpalatable truth which his figurative speech conveyed.

The reader need scarcely be informed, that the captain's allusions were to his old schoolmate Lelah Halcro, and indicated his intention of seeing her on his return voyage to the Shetlands; and this he accomplished, as we saw in a former chapter, when he visited the haymakers on "Meadow-mawin' day," in the neighbourhood of Skelaburg.

As we then saw, the captain and his party (his mate Bill being one of the number), were returning to their boat, which waited for them at the head of the Voe, and after a steady pull of about two miles off the land, where the "Bockanier" lay, the boat brought up under her quarter. On coming on board, the captain and Bill retired to their cabin, and placing a bottle of gin between them, sat down for the purpose of imbibing its contents, while they discussed the subject of the expedition in which they had been engaged.

"Now I say, Bill," cried the captain, as he raised a glass

of gin to his lips, "here's to the Beauty of Dynrastarness (that's the old name of my calf-ground, you know). That lovely leetle frigate I showed you is the one I told you about in Holland. My eyes! I was nearly capsized when I saw her, she's so vastly hansomer now. You said some landlubber would have her in tow. May be so; but will he get the weather gauge of Jack? No, never," and the captain looked fierce, and brought down his heavy fist on the table with such a thump as made the bottle jump a couple of inches from it.

"All right, cap'n," replied Bill slowly draining his glass; "but there's a little dead reckoning here, cap'n, I want to look at; how are you to get a warp aboard when you take this tidy leetle craft in tow? That's the tickler Bill can't make out no ways."

"Jest you belay there, mate," said the captain, as he filled another glass; "Jack knows how to tack and wear, and never hauls down his colours when he's got to fight; but here's to my bonnie birdie in a flowing bumper;" and the captain drained his gass.

"And here's to her, I say, cap'n; only once in my life have I seen so lovely a face, and that was afore I put my hands in the tar-bucket. Ah! cap'n, that leetle business near made a sheer hulk of poor Bill Ericson; but no matter, it's all over now. I was not myself for a long spell, an' so out of gear aloft," and Bill pointed to his forehead, "that I began to write poetry!"

"Did you though, Bill?" cried the captain, with surprise. "Well, I should like to do that 'ere sort of thing, but I don't see any ways how I should get it to splice; can't you show me how to handle the marlinspike, and just have a keek in your locker, and see if you ain't got some spun yarn there away?"

"I rather think I have, though," said Bill; "anyways, I'll overhaul for it;" and Bill rose and rummaged in his chest, and after hauling out his "toggery," and turning over a lot of well-

worn books, he came on a parcel of manuscript, yellow with years and grease. "This here is the best one," said Bill, pulling out a paper from the centre of the bundle; "though it does not clink like the chain cable, this is what I now call blank shot, though when I talked finer, and had more learnin' than I have now, I called it blank verse, and I think it will just do for your pretty Polly, what you call her?"

"Lelah," cried the captain, "but fire away, Bill; let's have the smell of this blank shot of yours; and there's a match for you," added the captain, filling out another glass of gin.

Bill tasted the liquor, and then opened out the paper, and read in a fine clear voice, and with perfect pronunciation, as follows:—

As I wandered through this vale of tears,
There fell a ray of light across my path,
And by it I beheld the loveliest form
That ever sat upon the lap of earth
Since Eve in bliss and ease luxurious
Reclined beneath the shadow of the grove.
A maid, in all the glory of her charms,
Stood bathed in mellow light before me;
Her auburn locks in wanton ringlets fell
Adown her snowy neck and heaving bosom;
Her graceful mein and symmetry of mould
Outvied all powers of ancient Grecian art;
Her cheeks had borrowed from the rose's dye
Enough to contrast with the lily-white
Of her fair brow. Her eyes, soft as the dove's,
Sparkled with matchless brilliancy,
And through them shone the essence of
A thousand human souls.
Twin roes that fed on Hermon's dewy slopes,
White like the waving lilies which they crop,
Nestled beneath the dainty silken bands,
Which straining, bound them in their sacred fold.
Salem's wisest king, in boldest imagery
And glowing oriental strains, could only tell
My ecstacy, thus to behold her heaving bosom
Rise and fall in gentle undulations

Like slumbering waves on Thule's rocky shore,
Which oft in early youth I've watched
By full orbed moon her silvery rays reflecting.
Tumultuous passions seized upon my soul,
And thrilled my frame with countless vibrations;
And in that moment of wild ecstacy,
I wished to draw her to my beating heart;
But as I stretched forth my arms to clasp her,
The fading ray of light did melt away
In softer rainbow hues, when darker still
The shades around me closed; but like
A gentle zephyr breathing past, I heard
Her voice in pitying accents say,
"FAREWELL!"

"Shot and blazes!" exclaimed the captain, slapping his thigh as Bill finished his paper, "if that ain't Lelah to a tee. You call that blank cartridge, Bill? Well, maybe so; but I'm a Dutchman and a half if there ain't flash and fire enough in it to blow up a liner; and I'm blowed if I don't have a mind to lower away the long boat, and catch my pretty bird to-night; so what say you, Bill? will you be staunch as the best bower, and join me?"

"Now, cap'n, belay there," said Bill looking serious, "this 'ere love affair of yours has unshipped your running gear aloft, and put you two points off the course; and if you don't get all clear again, we're in Davy Jones' locker as straight as a pike-staff. You know," continued Bill, placing his arms akimbo, and looking straight at the captain, "this 'ere pretty wench has got friends; and suppose they don't show the white feather, what then? Blood an' murder, I guess, with a fast sailing frigate in our wake, and a bow chaser ticklin' our stern post atween wind and water with thirthy-two pounder pellets. No, no, cap'n, that leetle game of yours won't play. Port helm, an' take in some canvass till fair weather comes, soft and gently, or it won't do; that's my reckonin'!"

"Well, well," said the captain calmly, "maybe your right,

Bill. Next trip anyways I'll take soundings, and prick out on the chart, an' then we shall see the bearings."

The reader will no doubt be able to gather from the highly figurative language of those two worthies, that the plot to carry off Lelah Halcro from her friends and home, was only prevented by the clearer judgment of the mate Bill Ericson, who foresaw that such a daring act could not be attempted in broad daylight without the risk of bloodshed, and certain punishment overtaking the perpetrators of such an outrage; he therefore used his utmost influence to dissuade the captain from entering upon so dangerous an enterprise, and to wait until a more favourable chance should occur for accomplishing his object. Calmer reflection also showed the captain that an opportunity of this kind would be best brought about by obtaining such information from the natives as would make it clear whether Lelah Halcro was really the betrothed of his old rival, Olla Ollison; and if so, according to the well-known habits of lovers in those parts, they would have a trysting-place. To find out where that trysting-place was, became therefore the first step to be taken.

On his return voyage about two months after, he omitted no opportunity, while dealing with the natives of Dunrossness, to learn from them all he could about Lelah Halcro and her sweetheart; and this he did with great art, and in such a way as entirely to disarm suspicion, always speaking in broken English, and making it appear that it was the beauty and fine appearance of *all* the girls he saw in the meadow, that made him so anxious about their wellfare and matrimonial prospects; and thus gradually he ferreted out the truth that Lelah Halcro was to be married to the schoolmaster, Olla Ollison, and that they were accustomed to meet at night at their trysting-place, near the cliffs of Trosswickness. The captain, moreover, learned that it was only on fine evenings, and with clear moonlight, that the lovers went to so great a distance, and these

circumstances appeared to him to be highly favourable to the success of his scheme, because the same fine weather which would tempt them to stroll so far, would enable him to land in any of the creeks around the Ness, and which he knew it was impossible to do in rough weather. He therefore determined to cruise off the land, and wait the chance of such fine weather as should one time or other bring together such a combination of circumstances as would enable him to capture the girl without resistance by her lover or friends; and perhaps without its being known by any one what had become of her. In thus maturing his plan, his early experience and knowledge of the coast also came to his aid. He knew every stack and heilig, and "gio" and landing-place around the Ness, and he also remembered his experience at seal shooting when a young lad. In those times seals were very numerous around the coast, but owing to the precipitous nature of the rocks, only a very small proportion of the animals wounded were captured; and in many instances wounded seals were known to crawl up on the rocks during the night-time, and be found dead by the limpet-gatherers or sillick-fishers who visited the spot on the following day. A wounded seal on a rock gave out a mournful, moaning sound; and this the captain in his young days used to imitate for the purpose of playing practical jokes on the boys who accompanied him. He would conceal himself underneath a rock, and then, imitating the dying seal, would bring the boys to the spot in great excitement, when suddenly he would spring from his hiding-place, and laugh at their disappointment. This early accomplishment he now hoped to turn to practical and important use. He hoped that in the event of the lovers descending the shelving rock, as they might very likely do to avoid being seen by the sillick-fishers who passed that way, he could imitate a wounded seal while lying in ambush in one of the creeks, and thus decoy the young man from the side of his sweetheart, and then seize him, while another party in the boat

would capture the girl.

With his plan thus fully matured, and ready to be put into execution, he continued to cruise off the coast, anxiously scanning the heavens, and wishing for such a favourable lull in the weather as should make it safe for him to land on any part of the coast; but as it was now the month of October, each day seemed to lessen the prospect of settled weather, and at last a stong gale from the east sprang up, which forced him to abandon the coast, and proceed on his voyage to Holland, deeply chagrined at his want of luck, as he called it, but fully determined that, at some time during the following year, he would carry out his design, but as much earlier in the season as would give him a better chance of that weather which was necessary for its success.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Along the solitary shore,
While flitting sea-fowl round me cry
Across the rolling dashing roar,
I'll westward turn my wistful eye.

BURNS.

ON that evening when Lelah Halcro and her lover met for the last time at their trysting-place near the "banks" of Trosswickness, a boat might have been seen approaching from the south. After crossing the Voe she kept close to the shore, and was soon almost concealed from view by the dark shadows which the over-hanging cliffs cast upon the silent waters. The rowers, dressed in the garb of Dutch sailors, conversed in whispers, as they dipped their muffled oars with slow and steady stroke, and leaving in the wake of the boat, as she glided on, a luminous sparkling stream of phosphoric light.

In the stern of the boat was seated a man of somewhat bulky proportions, enveloped in a cloak, and wearing on his head a low-crowned hat, slouched over his eyes. In his right hand he grasped the tiller of the boat, making her turn sharply to every bend in the irregular outline of the shore; in his left he nervously clutched the folds of his cloak, scanning with restless eye the rugged summits of the dizzy heights above, and which were now sharply defined against the clear blue moonlit sky.

The reader will scarcely need to be informed that the steersman of this boat was none other than the smuggler Jack Smith, and now commander of the "Bockanier" of Overflakee, which vessel lay lazily resting on the bosom of the deep, about two miles off the land, her tall spars and quivering sails

reflecting the silvery sheen of a full-orbed moon. The four oarsmen consisted of the mate Bill Ericson, and three picked men of the ship's crew.

This was now the "Bockanier's" second voyage to the Shetland coast that season. On the first voyage the captain made his annual cruise amongst the islands on the west coast, reserving the east for his second voyage, which would bring him there early in August, so as to catch the fine weather which generally prevails during that month, and upon which depended the success of his enterprise.

Fortune sometimes favours the tyrant who crushes a nation's liberties, and also the midnight assassin who strikes his victim in the dark; and it favoured Jack Smith, the smuggler, and now sea-robber, on that calm night, when the silvery moon had wooed the lovers to their trysting-place, and when the restless waves which washed the dark rocky shore of Trosswickness were murmuring softly as they bore onward on their placid bosom the spoiler and tyrant—that spoiler who was about to rend asunder and trample under his feet the web of human happiness, sparkling with gems and spotless as snow, which two fond hearts had been weaving for themselves during many long years. Alas! how little they dreamed, as they rested on the shelving rock, and looked out upon the broad expanse of the dark waters slumbering at their feet, and gently flickering in silvery undulations beneath the pale moon, that this peaceful scene was about to be overcast by the wild tempest of unholy passion, and that the light and joy of life was about to be quenched in the darkness of grief and despair. The wolf was prowling near for his prey, and the remorseless paw of the crouching tiger was about to strike down Lelah Halcro's protector from her side, and carry her off to his den.

"I say, Bill, dus you know birds 'as roosts when the moon shines bright," at last whispered the captain, with an affected chuckle, as he jerked his thumb in the direction of the creek

to which the prow of the boat was pointing.

"I guess I do, cap'n," replied Bill, in the same undertone, as he rested his oar; "but, to be straight with you, cap'n, shiver me if I much like this 'ere catchin' business, especially as when you catch the hen-sparrow there may be some ugly business to do, if she's got a game cock for a mate, and one as knows how to use his bill and talons."

"Belay there, Bill," replied the captain, in a loud whisper, the words hissing through his teeth as he spoke; "none of your gammon hereaway; a true blue salt never croaks even when it blows hard, and now it's smooth sea and clear lunar observations; so you ain't goin' to disobey orders when the captin's got on the quarterdeck, nor show the white feather when true blue is the hoist. Your cock-sparrow or Master Tommiewake won't have a feather pulled, if he keeps his claws stowed, and puts a stopper on his jaw tackle; but leave me to tackle him anyhow, while you tackle Miss Kittywake, my pretty bird. I wouldn't hurt a feather of her wing for the 'Bockanier' where she floats; but she *must be* catched and tamed," and the captain clenched his fist and looked fierce.

Bill was not slow to perceive that it was now too late to attempt turning the captain from his purpose, and that any hint in this direction would only bring against himself the charge of cowardice; he therefore merely said, "All right, cap'n. Bill knows his duty, and always has done it. Catchin' a bird, howsomever, is one thing, and taming another; hopes you do the last as well as Bill does the first;" and Bill winked, and dipped his oar with a strong pull, in order to bring the boat's head close to the rock at which the captain and his accomplice were to land. This was a level rock, forming a natural jetty, on one side of the creek about 200 yards to the east of the lovers' trysting-place. As soon as the boat touched the rock the captain sprang out, followed by the sailor Vander Dunder, who was to accompany him, and both began to ascend the tortuous

and dangerous path by which only the lofty summit of the cliff could be reached.

"Now, Dunder," whispered the captain, as the ascent began to get more difficult, "keep your weather-eye open, and don't be falling overboard. You ain't got no standing riggin' here, my lad; so pitch off them clumpers of yours, they won't go to Holland with ye."

"Yah! yah!" replied the Dutchman, in a suppressed voice, as he slipped off his wooden clogs, and continued to mount the steep ascent, the captain leading the way.

"Mein Gott, captain," exclaimed the Dutchman, as, now midway up the cliff, he gazed in terror from a perilous footing at the overhanging crag above; "you not goin' up dat der place—mine head go dis vay," and the Dutchman pointed to his forehead, and made a circular motion with his left hand.

"By G——, your head shall go *that way* if you don't stop that," fiercely hissed the captain, as he jerked his arm down in the direction in which Vander Dunder's head was to pilot his body.

"You keep close astern o' me," continued the captain, in a softer tone, "and I'll take you up as sound as a pump-bolt. I have done this here traverse sailin' afore now, and knows the course all right."

Thus encouraged, the Dutchman clambered after his leader, now and then catching hold of the captain's legs when there was nothing better to hold by. At last, after considerable exertion, and many heart-quakings and narrow escapes on the part of the heavy-footed son of the flat country, the summit was gained, and the captain, still leading the way, struck off to the west, and then made a circuit to the north, so as to return to the head of the creek, which lay on the north side of the rocky declivity where the lovers were seated. Here the captain, with his companion, descended, and after clambering to some distance over the huge masses of fallen rock,

which the force of the waves had piled up in the head of creek, they came in sight of the point around which the boat was expected to come, and after waiting a few moments, her dark form was seen stealthily approaching, but keeping so close to the rock as scarcely to be discernible, and was soon again lost sight of as she entered the dark shadow cast by the projecting cliff on the motionless water beneath.

As soon as the captain concluded that the boat had reached a stack or isolated rock, where Bill, now in command, had been instructed to halt, and which stood near where the lovers were seated, and which concealed the boat from view, he disappeared again amongst the fallen rock, selecting an aperture formed by two rugged masses resting against each other; he here concealed himself under the projecting ends of one of the fragments, while he placed the Dutchman in a similar position on the opposite side. He now put his fingers to his lips, and sent forth a long wail in imitation of a dying seal, which in the calm night, echoed back from the precipitous cliffs with a mournful cadence. As he anticipated, and as we saw from the hermit's own narrative of what occurred on that eventful night, this stratagem succeeded; for no sooner did the young man hear this sound proceed from the creek than he sprung to his feet, and, bounding away over the sloping rock, was soon lost to view amongst the rugged fragments in the creek already described. Entering at a point a little above high water mark, he treaded his way through the narrow openings until he passed the one where his enemies were lying in ambush. Just as he was passing through he felt himself seized by the feet from behind; and the opening being so small that he had no room to turn upon his assailants, he struggled in vain for liberty, until exhausted by loss of blood from the wounds caused by the sharp pointed rock beneath him.

While this tragic scene was being enacted, the boat noiselessly glided from her hiding-place behind the rock, but was not

observed by Lelah Halcrow; for, at that moment she was earnestly straining her eyes in the direction in which her lover had gone, and anxious to see him return again in safety; but her ear caught the sound of advancing footsteps, and on turning round the apparition of three men met her affrighted gaze. Her superstitous fears, so common in that age, flashed across her mind, converted these three beings, in human form, into demons or ghostly apparitions arisen out of the sea; for the boat was again out of sight, and the horror of the moment chilled her heart, and she swooned away, and would have fallen on the rock where she stood had not the strong arms of Bill Ericson caught her as she fell, who, rough sailor though he was, felt all the nobler impulses of his nature stirred within him by such an affecting scene; and had the way been open to give effect to his feelings, could at that moment have fought his way through seas of blood in defence of the lovely burden he quickly and gently bore to the boat. Here placing himself in the stern sheets, he supported his still unconscious charge, by placing his arm round her waist, her fair drooping head resting on his shoulder. Alas! how transient are life's fleeting pleasures! How vain its most fondly cherished hopes! In a few short moments how terrible the change! *Then*, two fond hearts beat in unison, and bright hopes built their aerial tenements of future bliss. *Now*, all has passed into the land of forgetfulness, and loved voices are silent as the grave. One lies stretched upon the cold rock, the blood still trickling from his wounds; the other, a captive and still unconscious that the cup of bliss has passed from her lips, and one full of human woe and agonizing grief given her to drink in its stead.

Oh, remorseless nature! how unbending are thy laws! how stern and inflexible are thy rules! how couldst thou be calm, and smile, and sigh, and murmur soft music, while youth, beauty, and innocence were betrayed, and the loving spirit of that bright form eclipsed in dark unconsciousness? O stars!

why did you twinkle in undimmed lustre? and thou, pale moon, was there no fragment of cloud to hide thy face from such a scene? Thou, Author of Nature upon thy throne of Justice, who holdest the whirlwind in the hollow of thy hand, and lightnings speed at thy behest, why didst Thou not smite the spoiler with a blast from heaven, and consume his accursed and cruel heart because it had no pity?

Dear Lelah, child of innocence and truth, God does not cause the lightning and the whirlwind to descend for thy rescue; but He can keep thee spotless and pure; yea, on the raging billow, and in the midst of fierce and lawless men, and in thy long sojourn in a foreign land, no evil shall come nigh thee. He that keeps thee does not slumber nor sleep; and when thy pillow shall be no more bedewed with tears, He will bring thee again to the land of thy birth, and to the arms of thy lover and thy long lost friends!

As soon as the struggles of their youthful victim had ceased, the captain and Van der Dunder hurried from the spot, and seeing the boat waiting, gave a loud whistle, which was at once answered by the forward motion of the boat towards the rock jetty, where the captain and his accomplice waited to be taken on board.

"God bless you, Bill," exclaimed the captain, as he sprang into the boat; "you're a staunch fellow, and every inch of a true blue; and here's my pretty bird at last. She ain't hurt, I hope, Bill; is she?" inquired the captain, looking anxiously at the lovely and still almost lifeless form which rested on Bill's bosom.

"Cap'n," said Bill hoarsely, "you said, God bless me; and I say amen to that, when I'm out of this 'ere business; but, cap'n, if there be such a Bein' aloft, which I sometimes doubt, and if He has got blessin's for you and me to-night, He ain't fair and square if He don't put a pinch o' brimstone in them. That's my say, cap'n; and blow my brains out for it, if you like."

"Avast there, Bill!" cried the captain, quivering with rage. "Unship!—give me the girl—feather your oar," and the captain sprang to the side of his captive, and Bill sullenly rose, and seating himself at an oar, began to pull.

"Give way!" hoarsely bawled the captain, and the rowers bent their oars like willows, as the sparkling foam danced from the bows of the boat as she rushed onward, leaving a broad stream of molten silver in her wake.

CHAPTER XIX.

Beneath the rough coat of the sailor lad
An honest heart beats lightly.
OLD PLAY.

As we saw from the hermit's own narrative of what occurred on this eventful night—shortly after his assailants had left him, he recovered consciousness, but awakened to find life's joys had fled, and the world before him a vale of tears. But cruel fate relented when she looked upon his beloved Lelah, now a captive in the tyrant's grasp, and therefore let her dream on. Only once or twice during the short passage to the ship did she languidly raise her long silken eyelashes, and look dreamily around; and then, as she again fetched a long-drawn sigh, the cloud of unconsciousness again closed over her. He that tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, pitied the poor lamb now shorn of all her earthly treasures, and did not permit her to know at once the darkness and desolation which had overtaken her; He tempered the chill blast of adversity to her feeble strength, and enabled her to pass safely through the fiery ordeal of affliction that awaited her.

As the boat entered the dark shadows which the motionless sails of the "Bockanier" cast upon the slumbering waters, Bill quickly drew in his oar, and springing to his feet, said—"Now, cap'n, as a favour for my share in this business, you just let me take this child aboard; I can do it gently, and I like to do it, cap'n." And Bill turned his face away from the captain, and looked up at the drooping pennant which hung from the mast head; for a big tear rolled down his cheek, and his voice quivered as he spoke.

"All right, Bill," replied the captain, "that same

favour ain't by no means a big one; but, big or little, you've earned it fairly; so here you are, my lad; I know you won't slip her overboard," he added, as Bill raised the lovely burden in his arms, and tenderly carried her up the steps of the strong wooden ladder, which had been let fall just as the boat approached the gangway.

Descending the cabin-steps, Bill laid the still unconscious Lelah on a couch which formed one side of the elegant cabin, and then gazed upon her with a mournful expression on his weather-beaten countenance, while the captain stood by his side, stern and unmoved, with his arms crossed, and his lips compressed, as if determined to hide the contending emotions which warred within his breast.

"Ain't my pretty Polly goin' to flare up, Bill?" inquired the captain, after a pause; and, with an assumed air of pleasantry, he added, "when she does, Bill, you'll be nurse, and get her braced round again all taut and square."

"Cap'n," said Bill, "just belay there, and bring me a little brandy and water."

"Here you are, Bill," said the captain, as he held a glass of water, and Bill sprinkled the shining drops on Lelah's forehead, and then, rising her head gently on his arm, he moistened her pale lips with a few drops of brandy from a glass which was also handed him by the captain.

As these restortatives were applied, the feeble pulse throbbed, and the pale cheek became gently flushed, and Lelah Halcro awakened as from a trance.

"Where am I?" she faintly inquired, "and why does the house move so; and why are strangers here?"

"Don't you know me, Lelah?" exclaimed the captain, coming forward, as Bill withdrew, to one side, "your old schoolmate, Jack Smith, that fought for you like a Turk, and loved you as his life; and here we are now all right, tight, and happy, on board the gallant 'Bockanier,' bound for Holland

—a jolly country, and a lady I'll make you there. So cheer up, my pretty bird, and don't look glum ;—fair weather, a fair wind, and your old friend, Jack Smith, the jolly true blue, and as staunch as the best bower ; and what could you wish more ?"

Slowly did Lelah Halcro raise herself from the couch on which she rested, as the captain's hurried sentences fell upon her ear, the meaning of which her wandering senses did not seem to comprehend, until the dreaded name of " Jack Smith" was repeated ; and then a flash of intelligence passed over her countenance, and she sprang to her feet, as if endowed with superhuman strength.

" Wretch, fiend, and murderer !" she exclaimed, as she fixed her flashing eyes upon the man who stood before her, and which seemed to penetrate his very soul. " Where is my lover ? Does not his blood call for vengeance from the cold rock where he now lies ? but strike here, and let me follow him !" and she pointed to her bosom.

" Now, now, my pretty Lelah," cried the captain, " you've got a list to sta'bord, and all on the wrong tack. We ain't in the murderin' line at all hereaways ; so, just you lower your gaff, my pretty girl, and make yourself at home till we get on the tother side, and then we shall have a leetle bit of neat splicing to do, an' that will make it all square ; so give me your hand, my pretty mate, an' let us be friends till something better turns up."

" Monster !" exclaimed the noble girl, as she shrunk back with horror from the proffered hand, " that hand has blood on it. It is the hand of a murderer ; let it not touch me. God gave me life, and I dare not take it away while you leave me alone, captive as I am ; but put that blood-stained hand upon me, and I cast myself upon God's mercy, and seek refuge from your power in the cold embrace of death. Then take my poor body," she continued, in a solemn voice, " and wrap it in a hammock, and in the silent night let it fall with a heavy plunge

in the deep, and let it sink down, down to the Land of Rest! But when the wind moans through the shrouds of your ship, then list, and hear my ghost shrieking for vengeance! Then look and see the drops of my murdered lover's blood falling on your deck; and no water shall ever wash them out; and——"

"O Bill, Bill," exclaimed the captain, as he struck his hands on his forehead, and rushed on deck, followed by his comrade, "I cannot stand that," he muttered, gasping as he grasped the taffrail, and trembling in every limb. "Not that I suppose," he added after a pause, "that the fellow is dead, though no doubts on it, he might soon come to a sheer hulk, and water-logged too, if nobody found him out; but what shivers my timbers, Bill, from stem to stern, is that infernal old yarn about —Stand from under.[1] Never since I first heered that same yarn has it got out of my head, and now the croak of that corbie we have got aboard has made it worse than ever; and, if it be true what she says, that the fellow is dead, and maybe she knows, then what are we to do, Bill? that's the reckonin' that beats me, and I give it up."

"Well, well, captain," replied Bill, "you know well I told you I did not like at all that catchin' business when you first spoke of it; and now you see what's come of it; but if you want my reckonin', cap'n, this is it all, straight and down on the nail; an' I say, you keep away from this 'ere girl, or she's overboard or through the cabin windows afore you can say 'Jack Robinson;' and then I guess, cap'n, we shall have two ghosts with a finger in this pie of yours instead of one. Now, then, if that's as straight as a pike-staff, you ask what are we to do, and that same question is what I've got to answer; and it is this, cap'n,—that you and I shift our quarters to the night-house upon deck, and let the girl have the cabin all to herself; and if you make that square, I'm out of my reckonin' if I don't bring her round to the wind all right."

[1] See Note P. Sailors' Superstitions.

"But, Bill," interposed the captain, "suppose that's the course till we make the Dutch coast, how do you steer then, my lad? that's the tickler, I fancy."

"O, no tickler at all, cap'n," replied Bill; "you just look at my reckonin', an' I'll prick you out on the chart all clear. You know Mrs Vanderboor, and her pretty leetle Polly; there away is a nice anchorage for your Lelah, till she gets as tame as a duck."

"Just anchor there, Bill," exclaimed the captain with animation, and bringing his heavy fist down on the taffrail with a thump; "that's the harbour, and it'll do. You're a clever fellow, you are, Bill; and I'll leave you in charge of this 'ere leetle craft, for I see it all clear as the forestay. If I take the helm, she'll yaw an' play the devil with us; so you go below, and see how she looks now after the squall."

"All right, captain, thank you," replied Bill, as he descended the cabin steps, and found Lelah seated on the couch, with her hands clasped, and the tears coursing down her lovely cheeks—a friendly flood which had come to her relief, and cooled the burning fever of her brain. She started as Bill entered; but on seeing that it was not the captain, she looked calmer, and said, in a soft meek voice, "Now I am ready to die; let death come, and my sorrows shall cease."

"Oh my good girl!" cried Bill, his voice choked with emotion, "don't say that; I am a friend and countryman; and I swear by Heaven, that no harm shall come to you while I am mate of this ship. The captain has promised that he will not trouble you, and this cabin you're to have all to yourself till we get to Holland, and then I know a friend there as will take care of you; and I know God will take care of you, and bring you out of all this trouble yet;" and Bill turned away his face to hide his tears.

"Is it possible, O God!" Lelah exclaimed, clasping her hands and looking up, while the tears flowed afresh, "that I

am still under thy care, and that Thou hast sent me a friend even in this place, and in this hour of my tribulation? But what are friends to me?" she added mournfully; "my lover lies cold and still on yonder shore; and I shall no more hear his loving voice, nor see his loved form. But who are you that offer to be my friend?" she inquired after a pause.

"I am Bill Ericson, mate of this vessel," he replied, "and it was myself that carried you on board from the boat; and it's all because I've got a soft heart, and can't help it; and if it must come out, Lelah (for that I know is your name), it is because you are so like my own pretty Polly now resting in the churchyard. I love you for her sake, God help me! I shall never love another; but he who hurts you, my dear girl, shall first step over my dead body—that's it;" and Bill looked as if the annihilation of some one was necessary to give emphasis to this declaration.

"Thank you, and may God bless you," Lelah replied. "He has surely sent you in the hour of need. But can you tell me if my lover was murdered, or how I was brought here?"

"I hope he was not, Lelah," replied Bill; "but I do not know, and therefore I will not deceive you; but by-and-by I shall tell you all I know; but first you need some refreshment, which I will tell the cook to bring;" and Bill hurried up the steps.

While those thrilling scenes were passing on board the "Bockanier," a gentle breeze had sprung up, and filled her broad canvas, every inch of which had been shaken out by the captain's orders; and as the breeze freshened, the gallant ship, as if instinctive with life, and flying from a revengeful foe, gathered speed in her onward course, and dashed the dancing foam from her bows as she left a broad shining track in her wake. Far to windward lay the islands, like a dark fragment of cloud against the western horizon; and Lelah Halcro, a captive, lonely and forlorn, was bidding a long adieu to the

home of her fathers, and the scenes of her happy childhood and youth. But sad as her fate was, she was at least safe from intrusion, and from the detested presence of her captor; and this inestimable boon she owed first to her own marvellous courage and nobility of soul, and next to the warm-hearted and generous Bill Erickson, who, by a thorough knowledge of human nature, and especially of the weak points in the character of his superior officer, had got himself constituted her protector and guardian. Why he should have allowed himself to become an accomplice in effecting her abduction may appear at first sight strange and contradictory, but a moment's reflection will show that it was all but impossible for him to act otherwise. It must be remembered that he was only one of the party; and even if any plan for her escape had been practicable, he did not know how far he could rely on the men under his command; besides, Lelah Halcro never would have sought her own safety while her lover's fate was uncertain, and had she been left at liberty, would have fled to his rescue, with the risk of rendering the tragedy of that memorable night still more terrible than it was.

The first glance at the lovely face and form of Lelah Halcro awakened in the bosom of Bill Ericson such emotions as he could not conceal. She strikingly resembled his own dear Polly, as he loved to call her, though many years had passed since he had laid her under the green sod; but he cherished her memory with undying affection, and felt called upon to protect one who so much resembled her, as he would have protected her. He therefore eagerly took advantage of the captain's superstitious fears, and adopted such a course as would not only protect the object of his solicitude from danger, but bring her into a closer relationship with himself; and in such a way as the sincerity and generosity of his feelings could be best manifested, and yet without compromising his position as an officer of the ship.

That Lelah Halcro, a peasant girl, and with such a limited education as her position in life commanded, should so act the heroine, and put forth such power as to strike terror into the heart of the bold and lawless smuggler, may to some appear strange, if not improbable; but how many instances does history furnish of a similar nature? The poet says—

> "O woman! in our hours of ease,
> Uncertain, coy, and hard to please;
> When pain and sorrow wring the brow,
> A ministering angel thou."

And in the hour of trial, or in defence of assailed virtue, woman establishes a still higher claim to the name of angel, and has often risen to an altitude of power, and grandeur of character, which has smitten the spoiler as with a blast from Heaven, and turned his craven heart into water.

See Lelah Halcro, on a calm summer eve, when seated by her lover's side, soft and gentle as the cushat dove, her sweet silvery voice musical as an angel's whisper, and her eyes beaming forth the tenderest emotions of the soul; and then see her a captive in the cabin of the "Bockanier," and in the hated presence of her betrayer, and fully conscious of the peril to which she is exposed, and you see how the glorious nobility of virtue has changed the simple maiden into the heroine; her matchless beauty giving power and force to that torrent of eloquence which flowed from her lips, the very words of which came to her as if by inspiration, because few of them were to be found in her native dialect.

CHAPTER XX.

I sigh for Scotia's home, and I gaze across the sea,
But I cannot get a glimpse o' my ain countree.
GILFILLAN.

As we saw, when Lelah Halcro awoke to consciousness in the cabin of the "Bockanier," she could not comprehend why she was in such a place, nor how she had been brought there; but when the dreaded name of "Jack Smith" was understood by her, the mystery was solved, and the dark plot in which he had been engaged was laid bare as if by a flash of lightning. She saw in a moment the danger she was in, and the only means by which she could escape from it. She did not fall on her knees and implore him to release her for the sake of friends and home, for she well knew that Jack Smith neither feared God nor regarded man. There was only one power on earth which could overawe him, and that was the power of superstition, which held such a sway over the minds of men in that age, and more especially the class to which he belonged; and this power she weilded with such effect as to produce the happy results of being removed from his hated presence, and safe from his machinations.

Three days and nights of a fair wind filling the broad sails of the "Bockanier," and making her skim the ocean like a bird, brought in sight the low lines of the Dutch coast. During all that time Bill faithfully attended to the wants of his lovely charge, giving the cook special directions on her account, and producing for her table the best the ship could afford, which, owing to the smoothness of the sea, and her exemption from sea-sickness, she was able to partake of. He also did all in his power to alleviate the anguish of her mind, caused by the dread-

ful uncertainty which hung over the fate of her lover, and the thoughts of the sorrow in which she knew her friends were plunged,—mourning her as one dead. Bill took special precautions to protect her from intrusion, by allowing her to lock the cabin door on the inside, opening it only when he gave the password of his own name. The captain was fully aware of how he was loathed by his captive, and that any attempt on his part to make advances towards her might be attended with dreadful consequences, the thought of which had already so scared him. He was therefore contented to trust to time and the influence of Widow Vanderboor to bring Lelah to a different state of mind. On the vessel's arrival, therefore, at Overflakke, he allowed her to depart in the boat with Bill and two seamen without seeing her, merely remarking to Bill as he was about to leave,—

"Tell Missus Vanderboor as how I shall steer up river next voyage, and see my little kittywake, an' hopes by that time she's got her as tame as a duck."

"All right, cap'n," replied Bill; "I shall go over all that sort o' dead reckonin' when I get up; and no manner of doubts the missus will know how many fives make fifteen, and have it all straight and square next trip."

So saying, Bill returned to the cabin to assist Lelah to the boat, and the captain walked forward to give orders to the sailors doing duty there.

The owner of a vast fortune and of wide domains, if languishing on a bed of sickness, or racked with pain, would, if health could be restored, feed sweetly on a crust, and sleep soundly on a straw pallet. So it was with Lelah Halcro; dark and dreary was the path which her feet had trodden during the past few days and nights, lengthened as they were into ages; and darker still was the future upon which she was entering, But to be relieved from the power and presence of the man whom she looked upon as the murderer of her lover was relief indeed,

and a soothing of her sorrows ; and the expression of this feeling passed in fitful gleams over her sad countenance as the boat glided on her course up the smooth waters of the Maas.

During the passage few words were exchanged, as Bill had previously fully acquainted Lelah with his design, and the arrangements to be made for her safety,—being first to privately inform Widow Vanderboor of Lelah's history, her abduction, and the supposed murder of her lover by Captain Smith ; and next, if he did not find sufficient reason to trust Widow Vanderboor as Lelah's protector and guardian, to run any personal risk on her account, in order to find her a place of safety beyond the Captain's reach or knowledge.

On Bill's arriving with his fair companion at the house of Widow Vanderboor, he announced himself with, "Gooden Dach, mein good Frau Vanderboor," and then introducing Lelah, continued,—"dis moy meshie come to you from Capitain Smitz of de 'Bockanier ;' he come up river next voyage and see you, but not dis time."

"Oh, ver goot, ver goot," replied the widow, grasping Lelah's hand between both hers ; "mein ver dear *freund*, Capitain Smitz, *freund* be *mein freund*, and *mein* leetle Gretchen's *freund ;* and *du* stay long time, and be so *freundlich* vit us."

"Thank you, my good lady," faintly replied Lelah, as she sank on a couch to which she had been led by the kind widow.

The ominous words which the latter had just uttered, and indicating her friendship for Captain Smith, shot through the heart of the fair Lelah with a thrill of terror ; for she imagined how her own safety might be compromised in such a relationship, and forgot at the moment what Bill had previously assured her of, that if he found any reason to doubt Widow Vanderboor's fidelity as her protectress, he should find some other place of safety for her, and leave the other two seamen to return to the ship without him.

Widow Vanderboor, ignorant of the true cause of what troubled her fair visitor, attributed it to fatigue, and therefore sympathizingly replied, "Ah, mein ver poor *kind*, ship not goot for Fraulein; but be better in von two days; and den go out vit mein own *Tochter* to de pretty *garten*, and dat make Fraulein vell."

Bill guessed the cause of Lelah's distress, and therefore thought it better to make an explanation at once to Widow Vanderboor, so as to save any further misunderstanding. He therefore, addressing her, said—

"Me would sprach with you in this odder room for one small moment, and mine friend, Lelah, will rest a leetle."

"Ver goot, ver goot," replied the widow, as she led the way to the adjoining apartment.

"Now, mine good friend," Bill began, when both were seated, "me want to tell you dat Captain Smitz is one bad man. He has killed—murdered this poor child's sweetheart, and torn her away from her fadder and modder, and dey tink she is lost—drowned by fallin' over de rocks; and he now want you to help to force this poor child to marry him."

"Ah, *mein Gott!* I sall die," she exclaimed, as she turned ashy pale and trembled with terror. "Is it possible," she added, after a pause, "dat what you tell me of Capitain Smitz is true?"

"Yes, mine good lady," Bill replied, "it is all true, I know it is; and dis is why I want to tell you keep and protect dis poor child, and I will pay you mine own self. Not that she can ever be mine sweetheart; but I love her for mine own poor sweetheart's sake dat is dead, and I shall never marry anoder."

"Ah, mine goot brave mate!" exclaimed the widow, as she burst into tears, "*Gott* vill bless you, and dis poor *kind* shall be mine *kind*, like mine own dear Gretchen; and not till dis poor heart beats no more in mein bosom, and not till Capitain Smitz steps over mine dead bodie, shall any harm

come to dis dear *freund* of yours, and you shall pay noting."

The declaration of such noble and generous sentiments by this warm-hearted and amiable lady, was more than Bill's already overstrained feelings could bear, and the emotion he felt deprived him of the power of utterance. He clasped his hands over his face to hide his tears, while his stalwart frame shook with suppressed sobs.

"Ah, mine dear lady!" he at length exclaimed, "God will bless you, and Bill will pray for you when far away on the billow; though he may not do that for himself. Your kindness to dis poor lamb, now lonely and forlorn, will bring down Heaven's best blessings upon you; and dis is poor Bill's earnest prayer, and he is sure it will come so."

"Thank you, mein ver dear *freund*," sighed the widow, as she wiped the tears from her face; "but we must now see Fraulein Lelah, and say vords to comfort her." So saying, she opened the door, and Bill rushing up to Lelah, who had now fully recovered, exclaimed, "Thank God, Lelah, it is now all square! This noble lady is your safeguard, and under her roof no one can harm you. The load is now off my mind, and I shall die happy whenever that time comes; and so goodbye, I shall come and see you again next voyage."

"Nay, nay! mine dear friend," cried the kind-hearted widow, "you sit down and get some refreshments vit us, and see mein Gretchen who comes here, and vill be so happy to see you and von new freund, Fraulein Lelah;" and the widow pointed to her daughter, approaching by a winding path which led through the gay parterres which surrounded the chateau on all sides.

While the table was being covered with the choicest viands the house could afford, Gretchen entered. She was a lovely rosy girl about fourteen years of age, who, smiling and blushing, was led by her mother to Lelah, and introduced as "mein own Gretchen, your sister;" and then turning to Gretchen, she said—

"*Meine liebe, diese junge Dame wird mit uns bleiben. Sie mussen zu ihr freundlich sein, und wersuchen sie glücklich machen den ihre Freunde sin gestorben, und sic ist sehr unglücklich.*"

"*Ja, meine Mutter,*" replied Gretchen, "*ich will sie lieben als eine Schwester.*"

The repast being over, Bill arose to take his departure, and after taking an affectionate farewell of Lelah, Widow Vanderboor, and her daughter, he hurried to the boat with feelings of mingled joy and sadness. He felt his heart oppressed by a sense of melancholy at parting from Lelah, and had a presentiment that he would see her no more; but the complete success of his mission, and the safety and happiness of one who lay so near his heart, was in some measure a soothing of his grief. Poor Bill, the coming event had indeed cast its shadow before, and his presentiment that he should see Lelah Halcro no more, alas! proved too true; for, on her returning voyage to Shetland, the "Bockanier" was lost, and all hands on board perished in a fearful hurricane which she encountered when off the Doggerbank, but her fate was not known till long after, when a fragment of wreck bearing her name was picked up on the Shetland coast.

It was not till many years after that the sad and ultimate fate of her generous friend and protector became known to Lelah, and then she mourned him as a brother; and her already wounded heart bled afresh at the loss of one whose friendship was so pure, so noble, and unselfish, and who was willing to sacrifice even his life in defence of her who never could return him any favour. No doubt poor Bill died like a true British sailor, and left this changing scene, this vale of tears, with few regrets, for—

What was this world to him?
His Polly was no more;
She was not here to meet again,
But on the other shore.

And as the path there lay,
Deep through the yawning wave,
He smiled as one came rolling on,
To seal his ocean grave !

Also beneath that wave sunk, to rise no more, the bold and lawless man, the noted smuggler Jack Smith, with all his sins upon his head ; unless, indeed, he sought forgiveness at the eleventh hour. But here the curtain must fall—we dare follow him no further,

If any earthly pleasure could heal a broken heart, Lelah Halcro might have been happy ; for in her new home she experienced at the hands of Widow Vanderboor more than a mother's kindness, while her daughter loved Lelah as her adopted sister with the most devoted affection, and studied by a thousand endearing ways to carry Lelah's thoughts from the sorrows of the past to the enjoyments of life, which were now so fully put within her reach.

Widow Vanderboor studiously avoided any mention of Lelah's past sorrows, and tried by every means in her power to wean her thoughts from them. She had every reason to believe, from what Bill Ericson had told her, that Lelah's lover was no longer alive, and therefore, to return to her native land would only be to open up the wound afresh in her heart, and leave her in a solitary home to brood in silent sorrow over her irreparable loss, which, in her present position, refined society and loving sympathy could so well supply. She therefore considered it her duty even to conceal from Lelah the knowledge of any chance which might occur for her returning to her native land ; but this was a very remote contingency indeed, as, by the loss of the " Bockanier," the only connecting link between Widow Vanderboor and the sea-coast was broken ; nor was she likely again to receive visits from any one from that quarter.

Fraulein Gretchen had just finished her education, and

perceiving that Lelah, though several years older than herself, was deficient in everything, at once undertook, as a pleasing duty and labour of love, to instruct her adopted sister; and this she did with a zeal and earnestness which soon produced the most gratifying results.

Lelah Halcro proved a very apt scholar, and her progress was such as both pleased and surprised her kind friends. She soon learned to speak the German language fluently, which was Widow Vanderboor's mother tongue. She also made great progress in music, drawing, and indeed in all the accomplishments which Fraulein Gretchen herself possessed.

Thus Lelah's time was fully occupied either with her studies, or walking out with Gretchen in those sylvan retreats which the banks of the Waal so amply afforded. It was therefore only when she retired to rest, and when her head was laid on her pillow, that she could indulge in the luxury of tears. Then indeed "she wept sore in the night time, and her tears were on her cheeks," but they were tears of relief, and quenched the burning sorrow which consumed her heart; and she was thus enabled, with the commencement of each new day, to put on that air of contentment and happiness which she considered it her duty to show to her kind friends as the only reward she could give them for all their kindness and care of her.

Thus years rolled on, but the wound in the heart of Lelah Halcro healed not.

> "Time but the impression deeper makes,
> As streams their channels deeper wear,"

she could well say, for ever and anon, the face and form of her long lost Olla stood before her, as he appeared in the happy days of their plighted love; and oft friendly sleep opened dreamland, and brought back the bright visions of the past, the trysting-place by the sea-shore, and all the sweet memories

which crowded round those happy meetings ; but, alas ! it was only a dream, for

> " Her sorrows awoke with the dawning of morn,
> And the voice in her dreaming ear melted away."

Eight long years had come and gone, and Lelah Halcro was still the adopted daughter of Widow Vanderboor, and the loved sister of Fraulein Gretchen; but as the latter had recently become betrothed to a wealthy Dutch merchant, her walks with Lelah were not quite so frequent, and thus the latter was left much by herself, and which, indeed, she seemed to desire.

Her native beauty, so bright and dazzling when it bloomed in all its rustic freshness, had now become more *spirituelle* by sorrow, by the influence of education and refined society ; but her smiles, once so sunny, still shone through the veil of melancholy which hung over her lovely countenance—that countenance which no one could look upon without being moved ; and many conquests she would have made amongst the young mynheers in the land of her sojourn ; but Widow Vanderboor and her daughter knowing how sternly her purpose was fixed, did all in their power to prevent her being molested in any way by unwelcome addresses.

When walking alone, or when seated by the river, and screened from view by the tall willows which skirted its banks, her thoughts were occupied by strange musings. She would then go back in thought to the land of her birth, and feel a yearning to see it once more. Then would come up before her the vision of her murdered lover, and the thought that even were she to go back now it must make her heart bleed afresh ; and, besides, how could she leave those who had been more than mother and sister to her? And as she tried to banish the subject from her mind, this question would flash back again, Was her lover really dead? Was there not a possibility that he might still be alive? And if this were barely possible,

ought she not to go back, even if it were only to know the worst, and settle for ever those doubts which distressed her? Perhaps her father and mother were dead; and if so, then she would only make a short stay, and return again to Holland, to live and die beside her adopted mother and sister.

These musings so long and often occupied her mind, and formed what to her might be called a feast of joy and sorrow, that she tried to put her thoughts in verse; and in doing so, she sought words to suit a very old air which she remembered mothers in her native country singing when putting their babes asleep. As she remembered, it was sung in a low plaintive voice, like a wail of sorrow, as if the unknown future of the babe was the burden of the mother's grief.

To such an air Lelah's words, as will be seen, were singularly appropriate. She called it

THE EXILE'S LAMENT.

Break, O heart, or cease thine aching!
Let thine anguish now be o'er;
Friendly sleep, with no awakening,
Seal mine eyelids evermore.

Death, O death, why dost thou flee me
When I love thy cold embrace?
When from sorrow thou canst free me!
When from woe my soul release!

Long I've pined in silent anguish,
In this strange and foreign land;
Yet in grief I still must languish,
By a cruel murderer's hand.

Yes! that hand is stained with crimson;
See my lover's blood thereon!
See him like a hero dying!
All unaided, all alone!

Loving hands, O lift him softly!
Smooth the pillow for his rest!

Kiss, for me, his brow still lovely;
Spread bright daisies on his breast.

Bear him gently, lay him softly
Down into his narrow bed:
Let the sod be green and flowery
That wraps my darling lover's head!

But, methinks, a spirit whispers,
"Olla lives, and oft for me
Watches by the murmuring billow,
Gazes on the silent sea."

By the pale moonlight he wanders
Weary, lonely, and forlorn;
By our trysting-place, the Headland,
There his hapless fate to mourn.

Shall I meet him, O my lover—
Shall I yet his form embrace?
Shall our sorrow yet be over—
Shall I see his smiling face?

Trosswick banks, shall I behold you,
Towering with your crags on high?
Shall your dark outlines unfold you
To my tearful, longing eye?

Sumburgh Beacon, brightly gleaming
Like a twinkling guiding star;
Will thy light, so joyful streaming,
Guide me where my treasures are?

Guide me o'er the stormy billow,
Where my youthful feet did roam,
From the land of flood and willow,
To my own dear native home!

CHAPTER XXI

Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure—
Sweet is pleasure after pain
DRYDEN.

IT was on a beautiful evening in autumn, when the russet clothing of tree and shrub, and the scattered leaves resting on the moist pathways, told that Ichabod was being written on summer's charms, and that gloomy winter was near at hand. Lelah was resting on her favourite rustic seat, which was beautifully trellised around by creeping plants, and concealed from view on the river by the tall reeds which grew thickly on its banks. She had just finished the last stanza of her song, and as its mournful cadence died away in the calm evening air, she thought she heard voices proceed from the river, and again the sound of oars dipping the water. Startled and surprised she sprang to her feet, and tripped lightly over the smooth lawn towards an opening in the reedy screen through which a view of the river could be obtained; but just as she reached this spot, a boat shot past within a few yards of the shore, with two seamen pulling, and a man seated in the stern, dressed like an English captain. The moment this person saw her, he raised his hat, and signalled the rowers to stop the boat.

"Pardon me, gentle lady, but I wish to speak to you; and I do so in English, because I have just been listening to the words of your song, which indeed has quite overpowered me, and filled my heart with strange emotions, for in that song you have mentioned my native land."

"And where is your native land, may I enquire?" said Lelah, trembling with excitement, and scarcely able to articulate the words.

"Shetland is my native country, and Trosswick and Sumburgh, which you mentioned in your song, are spots which gladdened my youthful eyes, and are still dear to my heart."

"Great heaven!" exclaimed Lelah in a whisper, and then added more audibly, "And what is your name, sir, may I ask?"

"My name," replied the captain, "is Tom Yunson, and my father's name is Yacob, and he is still alive in the village of Trosswick, for one of my men has come from that quarter not long ago."

Lelah's excitement had now become insupportable, and she felt her strength giving way; but she was able to say, in a faint tremulous voice, "Does your sailor know any one of the name of Olla Ollison there?"

"Yes," replied the captain; "I have just been hearing from him all the home news, and there is such a man still alive and well; but he lives as a hermit, and people think him a strange person, because he goes often to the sea-shore, and sits there alone."

"O God! is it possible?" she exclaimed, and then fainted away, falling softly against the mossy bank near which she stood.

Quick as lightning the captain sprang from the boat, which was now close to the river's bank, and raising her in his arms, sprinkled her face with water, which one of the sailors brought him, and Lelah quickly recovered, and was led by the captain to a rustic seat close by.

"This is a strange adventure, gentle lady," said the captain, again addressing her; "and I beg you will tell me your name, for surely some wonderful fate has led me to find you here."

"My name is Lelah Halcro," replied Lelah; "I'm a countrywoman of your own, and the news you have brought me is passing strange, and has quite overpowered me."

"Merciful Providence!" cried the captain, grasping her

hand, "is it possible you are really Lelah Halcro? Now I understand it all. You were carried off by that scoundrel Jack Smith in the 'Bockanier;' but, thank God, all will be well yet; you will find your sweetheart alive and well, and my ship is at your service."

"O, am I asleep or awake; or is this a vision again from dreamland to mock me?" soliloquised Lelah, clasping her hands, as a flood of tears came to her relief.

"It is no dream, my lady," replied the captain; "but if you have any doubt, see, there is my name," and he bared his arm, showing her his name in full, tatooed with an anchor and chain entwined around it. "There, you see," he added, "that is true blue; and if you come with me, you shall have my cabin to yourself, and everything I can do to make you comfortable, and only a three days' run to Sumburgh Head."

"I thank you, and may God bless you for your kindness," said Lelah; "but leave me alone for a short time that I may collect my thoughts, and I will decide."

"All right, my lady," replied the captain; "we will lie concealed down there by the clump of willows, until you make up your mind, and will be here at the time you appoint."

"I will return in half-an-hour," she replied, as she lightly ascended the bank, and hurried to her favourite bower. As soon as she reached its quiet retreat, she threw herself on her knees, and poured out her soul in fervent thanks for the glad tidings which had been brought to her, and imploring Divine aid to guide her in deciding the momentous question which she had only one short half-hour left to consider.

Shortly she arose from her knees, and her purpose was fixed; for something like a voice from Heaven whispered the word in her ear, "Go;" but the pang of leaving her dear friends without seeing them shot through her heart like an arrow, and her purpose again faltered. Should she yet go back and tell them all, and ask permission to go with these strangers?

This was her duty, and gladly would she have performed it; but would Widow Vanderboor and her daughter trust her in the hands of strangers? Would they believe the report that her lover was still alive, and permit her to cross the tempestuous sea, now so far advanced as the season was? All this she feared they would not do, and much less would they trust her again to walk by herself; and thus the last chance of ever seeing her native land again might be lost.

"It must be now or never!" she cried; "but I will write and explain all, and leave it in the bower here." So saying she opened out a portfolio, which she carried with her, and spreading out a sheet, wrote a letter in German, of which the following is a translation :—

"DEAREST MOTHER AND SISTER,—O, pity and forgive me. I must leave you for a little time. My lover is still alive, and I must go and see him. I go in a ship to my native land; and a countryman I know and can trust takes me there. His boat came by accident to the river's bank, near my bower; and I thought to come first and tell you all, but feared you would not believe me, nor trust me to go with strangers, and then I would see my long lost lover no more. But my heart bleeds to leave you, my dearest loving friends; but I will return and seek your forgiveness on my knees. Yes, I will soon come back, and pour out my heart in gratitude to you for all your kindness and care of me.—Your ever affectionate and loving daughter and sister,

"LELAH HALCRO."

This letter, wet with tear-drops, she folded and addressed, and, laying it on the rustic seat, hurried to the boat, which was waiting for her at the appointed place.

"Here you are, my dear lady," said the captain, as he sprang out of the boat, and assisted Lelah to step on board; and then seating himself by her side in the stern, he said, addressing the sailors—

"Now, my lads, give way, and keep close by the left bank of the river; then we shall not be observed from the shore."

The men bent their oars, and the boat shot onward, gliding swiftly and smoothly down the broad bosom of the river.

Lelah spoke but little, for her thoughts were swallowed up in pondering over the marvellous events of the day, which had indeed been so strangely brought about.

When Lelah did not return at the usual time, Widow Vanderboor and her daughter went to seek her in her accustomed walks, and, coming to her bower, they found the letter there, which had been left for them. On reading its contents, they were both struck speechless with grief and astonishment, but their faith in her was unshaken; they understood why she feared to come and see them before going away. The distress of the parting scene, and the fear that they would oppose her going at all, were the powerful motives which had forced her to leave them so abruptly. The assurance which she gave in her letter that her lover was still alive, filled their hearts with gladness; for they knew that nothing else in this world could ever remove sorrow from her heart, and enable her to again enjoy life; and they knew she would fulfil her promise, and return to see them at the earliest opportunity. With these thoughts they comforted and consoled themselves, until they should hear further intelligence from her.

The reader will remember that, in a former portion of this narrative, it was stated that old Yacob had a son at sea, from whom he had received no intelligence for many years; for Tom Yunson had seen many strange lands, and been where he had no opportunity of communicating with those friends he left behind. Returning, however, at last to a British port, he got command of a vessel bound for Holland, which vessel was now lying at Overflakkee, waiting for a cargo.

The leisure thus afforded Captain Yunson he employed in making excursions in his gig up the canals and rivers of the country, and it was on one of these excursions up the Waal

that he was led by Providence to the spot of Lelah Halcro's residence, and thus made the means of fulfilling his father's earnest wish, expressed by him on the last occasion when he parted from the hermit; his words, as the reader will remember, being, "An' I earnestly pray dat her dat wis taen awa fae you may yet be restored ta you, an' dat me or mine may in some wy or idder be da means o' bringin' dis aboot."

On reaching the ship, Captain Yunson conducted Lelah to the cabin, which he gave up entirely for her accommodation.

The ship's cargo being now completed, her broad sails were unfurled to a prosperous breeze, and as the ship went on her course, and as the low-lying coast-line of Holland became lost to view, how overwhelming were the thoughts that crowded upon Lelah's mind! Here she was once again the solitary occupant of a cabin; but how changed the scene! *Then* she was a trembling captive, leaving with heart-rending sorrow her native land, and before her the dark unknown future; *now* the dark cloud had rolled away, and the star of hope again twinkled brightly in the serene sky of the future. She had drunk the bitter cup of human sorrow to its dregs, and now the cup of pleasure which had been put into her hands was so intoxicating, so overwhelming, that she trembled as she put it to her lips. But, alas, how unstable are all hopes! how transient are life's best joys! for they are indeed like

> "The snowflake on the river—
> A moment seen, then gone for ever."

Or, again, when the goal has been almost reached, one false step and the prize is lost for ever, and Lelah Halcro is yet once more to be the sport of cruel fate; and when just near her native land, and ready to fly to the arms of her lover, the angry waves are to raise their foaming crests as a barrier in her path, and the wild tempest moan in rage as she stretches forth her hand to secure the precious fruit—the reward of all her sorrow and suffering.

CHAPTER XXII.

The wind grew loud, and the sea grew rough,
And the ship was rent in twain.
BALLAD.

THE reader will remember Halloween, when the merry gathering of lads and lassies surrounded the hospitable hearth of Bawby .o' Brigstanes, and when the approach of a south-east wind forced that happy company to break up at an earlier hour than usual.

On that memorable night the "Ocean Spray," bearing the precious and priceless freight of a lovely woman, became the sport of the raging tempest, and drifted helplessly on to destruction. Captain Yunson had sighted the bold rugged promontory of Sumburgh Head, and was shaping his course for the sheltered bay of Levenwick, when the storm broke upon him. But a few hours more, and he would have reached the haven of safety; but, alas! it was to be otherwise; his gallant ship was to be cruelly gored to death by the pointed rocks of Sloga Head, and beaten to splinters by the mighty waves which rolled upon the rocky beach of Trosswick.

It was about ten o'clock at night, when the prelude to the coming storm told the experienced eye and ear that a tempest was following hard behind. Fitful gusts shot through the valley of Trosswick, and a hoarse murmur came from the distant cliffs, while dark masses of clouds from east to west fled athwart the sky, like demons chasing each other. Another hour, and the hurricane reached its height—one loud unbroken roar sweeping on with resistless force, and making every cottage tremble to its foundation, while masses of churned froth from the seething

waves as they rolled on the shore, were carried high in the air over the house tops, and far into the loch beyond.

Ere the tempest reached its height, men could be seen, clad in sea-going attire, securing boats and corn stacks by placing additional ropes, and heavy stones to anchor them to the earth, that they might better withstand the fury of the blast.

"He's a wild nicht, Tammie," shouted Rasme Rudderhead to Tammie Toughlands, as the latter was putting an additional "fastie" on a screw.

"Ay, man, he's dat," shouted Tammie in reply; "dis nicht 'ill be heard o' yet, tak du my wird fir dat."

"Man, dey say dere wis a ship seen aff da head aboot dayset," again roared Rasme, his voice barely audible above the roar of the tempest.

"Düs du say sae? den Lord hae mercy apo' der souls," ejaculated Tammie; "fir dere's nae ship can live in da sea dat he's on just noo."

"Ay, I fear it, man," cried Rasme; and then added, "kens du if auld Yacob has tried to lay da wind da nicht yet?"

"I never ken, boy; but I sall geng alang een noo and see," roared Tammie, as he bent his head to the blast, and made for old Yacob's dwelling. On reaching it he found the door shut, and on knocking loudly old Yacob came, and removing a spade with which it was barred, called out—

"Whaa's dere?"

"It's me, Yacob," cried Tammie.

"O, it's dee, Tammie," said Yacob, opening the door and admitting him, and then quickly bolting it again by the same primative appliance; and in doing so it required all the strength of his body to hold against the force of the wind which pressed the door inwards.

"I just lüikit in alang," explained Tammie, as Yacob and he advanced towards the inner end of the cottage, "ta see if ye tocht ye wid be able ta come fort and try and lay da wind; fir

man, he's fearful ootside; and dey say dere wis a ship seen i' da east sea just afore dayset, sae it's muckle needit baith by laand an' by sea if da strent o' da wind cud be broken ony wy."

"O spaek na till him, spaek na till him," groaned Peggy, rocking herself to and fro in her chair, with her hands clasped and resting on her lap, "unnatural bein' dat he is," she continued; "kennin' dat his bairn is tossin' upo' da ragin' sea, an' he sittin' here wi' a hert as hard as da nedder mill-stane, an' winna geng oot ta sober da wind, though weel he can dü it, as he's düne afore; an' every minit I'm fearin' da tinbill 'ill be laid within da cauld steede, an' den we'll nidder hae hoose nor hald ta geng ta; but we'll no be brunt i' da ruins, dat's ae Lord's mercy; fir ye see, Tammie, I'm whumbled da kettle ower da fire in case o' ony thing happenin', though it's geen me my death o' cauld up trow da soles o' my feet;" and Peggy placed her feet against the sides of the kettle, which covered the few remaining embers on the hearth, now nearly put out by the formidable extinguisher which had been placed over them.

"O deil dore dee, Peggy," said Yacob, "an' haud dy tongue aff me some time; what gude can my layin' da wind dü, I winder?. I can thole da wind as lang as da ruif bides on; bit I canna thole dy everlastin' sharg, dats' warr den ony nor-east storm dat ever blew."

"Ay, bit Yacob," interposed Tammie, "I tink Peggy is in da richt dis time; ye ken ye've aften laid da wind afore noo, whin dere wis mebbe no sae muckle need fir it, an' if it does nae gude it 'ill dü nae ill, ony wy."

"Ah, weel, boy," said the good-natured Yacob, "if it 'ill please dee I'm shüre I can try it; sae come awa an' we'll see whidder it can dü ony gude or no." So saying, Yacob arose and pulled his knitted cap down over his ears, and buttoning up his jacket, took his staff in his hand, and stepping out over the floor, was followed by Tammie.

When they got outside, Yacob placed himself on the "brig-

stane," with his face towards the east, and taking his staff in his left hand, raised his right arm, and pronounced the following incantation, sawing the wind with his arm as he spoke:—

"Robbin cam ower da vaana wi' a shü nü; Twabbie, Toobie, Keeliken Kollickin, Palktrick alanks da robin. Güid sober da wind." [1]

But the wind sobered not; the spirit of the storm, as if in mockery of such feeble attempts to propitiate his wrath, raged still more furiously, and drove the clouds of salt spray, hail, and sleet, with hurricane force, against the earth, so that old Yacob had to beat a hasty retreat to his cottage; and Tammie, taking the shelter of the yard dyke, reached his own habitation in safety.

Few in the village of Trosswick slept that awful night, for the tempest raged with unabated violence, and the inmates of many a cottage crowded round their cheerless and fireless hearth, expecting every moment that the roof which covered their heads would be scattered to the winds, and they left exposed to the pitiless blast.

As dawn approached the gale slightly moderated, and all able-bodied men were soon astir to see that their boats were safe, and if any wrecks had been thrown upon the shore during the night.

As the foremost of the men approached the head of the creek, fragments of wreck, consisting of pieces of bulwark, spars with torn sails and rigging attached, were seen scattered along the beach, or wildly tossed on the crests of mighty waves, which, one after another, rolled upon the shore in mountains of snowy foam. A life-buoy was also picked up with the name "Ocean Spray" painted on it. All this convinced the men that the hull of a vessel must have struck on some of the outlying

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[1] These are the exact words of an incantation used by the old men of a bygone generation, when they wished to "lay the wind." The words were repeated to the author by an old woman some years ago.

skerries, and two men were therefore despatched to reconnoitre the shore along the north side of the Ness, but they had not proceeded far along the cliff when they were seen to stop suddenly, and point towards the scarf skerries. Then came a wild and thrilling cry, borne on the wings of the blast—

"A ship ! a ship ! on the scarf skerries." Fast the thrilling news spread, and, like another fiery cross, was carried with breathless speed from cottage to cottage, from village to village, arousing alike the stripling and the greyhaired sage, who soon were seen running side by side to the scene of the disaster.

In a short space of time the shore was lined with hundreds of spectators, all eagerly straining their eyes in the direction of the stranded vessel, her form now being seen from the beach ; but owing to the haze caused by the drifting spray, it was impossible to discern whether any survivors remained. The ship, evidently a brig, had struck on the seaward side of the rock ; and as the waves rolled against her she had been gradually forced up its sloping surface until her prow rested on its highest elevation, and her stern still exposed to the fury of the tempest.

The flood-tide was now setting in, and it was therefore evident that the stranded vessel could not long remain in her present position, but must soon be swept by the force of the waves into the deep water which lay between her and the shore.

As eager groups were watching in breathless suspense the tremendous waves, as they rolled over the skerry, and sometimes almost burying the dark hull of the vessel in their seething foam, the startling cry was raised, "The Hermit ! the Hermit !" and soon all eyes were turned towards the hermit's hut on the Ness, from which he came running at his utmost speed down the declivity of the headland, his form bending against the blast, and his long hair floating behind.

A few moments more, and he reached the beach, his eyes flashing, and his whole being as if under the influence of some powerful spell.

"Thoughtless men!" he exclaimed, as he advanced through the crowd, "See you not that there are survivors on yonder wreck, and soon they must perish! The flood tide is advancing; not a moment is to be lost!"

"O, Mr Ollison," exclaimed old Yacob (who was amongst the crowd), as he rushed forward and grasped the hermit's hand, "what can men dü in da face o' a sea like dis? We canna see fae here whidder ony o' da crew is still left; but if dey ir, den Lord hae mercy on der souls, fir nane here can help dem."

"But I will help them," cried the hermit, "or perish in the attempt." With this, he divested himself of his clothing, all to his shirt and trousers; and taking the kerchief from his neck, bound it round his head, thereby closely concealing his flowing locks within its folds. He next grasped the end of a rope which lay coiled at his feet, and tying it securely round his waist, again addressed the crowd—

"Fellow countrymen!" he said, in a solemn and stern voice, "as you hope for mercy in the world to come, I ask you now to aid me in this work of mercy. You see every moment the flood tide is gaining strength, and those mighty waves will soon sweep the ill-fated vessel from her present position; therefore obey the instructions I now give you, and mark that I will wait until I see a wave approaching, which I know must overwhelm the ill-fated vessel, and sweep her from the rock, and then as that wave rolls back, I will dive through the one that succeeds it, and swim to the survivors, if they can be saved. They are now clinging to the bowsprit, and that spar will part soon, as the vessel leaves the rock; when I reach the floating spar I will raise my arm as a signal, if the survivors are still on it. Then draw the rope quickly to land, waiting till the highest wave approaches, so that the spar may be carried on its crest to the top of the beach; then let some of your strongest men be ready, with ropes around their waists, to save us from being

drawn back again by the receding wave."

"We will do all you say," exclaimed a hundred voices, while old Yacob, with tears streaming down his cheeks, threw his arms round the hermit, crying, "O what is dis ye're gaen ta dü, Mr Ollison—cast your ain life awa in tryin' to save idders? Na, na; fir da Lord's sake an' my sake, dünna temp Providence; fir nae mortal man can face dis awful sea, every lay comin' in laek da hill o' Hallilee."

"Tempt me not, Yacob," sternly replied the hermit; "you know not what you say. In a vision last night I saw this scene before me, and now the hour is come when release from my sorrow is at hand; but whether in life or death this is to be accomplished I know not. God's will be done. Duty calls me here, and my mission must be fulfilled."

As he uttered these words, a mighty wave rolled upon the shore, and sent its floating foam to the highest elevation of the beach, and then went back with a voice of thunder, caused by the loosened rocks and boulders striking against each other as they rolled down in the descending torrent which madly rushed to meet the succeeding wave.

Swift as the receding waters fled down the declivity, the hermit followed, drawing the rope after him; and as the next wave, like a wall of emerald, rose high over his head, he was seen to throw his arms around a fragment of rock which projected like a pillar from the beach, and was instantly lost to view in the roaring seething waters which rolled over him, and sent its floods of foam higher up the beach than before.[1]

"O God, he is lost! and there the ship is gone at last!" broke from hundreds of voices, as the moving masses of awe-struck spectators swayed to and fro in an agony of excitement. It was when this mighty wave, like a mountain, came towering on, that the dark hull of the vessel was seen trembling on its

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[1] See Note Q. Native Courage.

summit, and then in a moment disappeared in the yawning valley behind. That same moment, the hermit's rope was drawn quickly from the shore ; and just as the wave broke and poured itself down in one mighty cataract of green, streaked with broken foam, he was seen like a dark speck on the snowy bosom of the waters beyond—striking out as only an expert swimmer could, and struggling hard to reach the floating spar, which had parted from the vessel as he predicted it would.

"There, he has it!" broke wildly from the crowd on the shore, as he was seen grasping the spar with its precious freight (for two survivors were seen on it). Now he attaches the rope to it—there his arm is raised as a signal, and the rope is quickly drawn in by strong arms, as a mighty swelling wave follows. A piercing cry breaks from the beach, as the spar with its living freight rises aloft on the broken wave, and then rolls over and over in the wild seething maelström, which rushes hither and thither in foaming wavelets, like sheeted spectres still bent on the work of destruction ; but onwards and upwards, as if guided by unseen hands, that priceless spar is borne, and twenty brawny arms are ready to receive it. Three human forms, apparently lifeless, are secured to that spar by ropes. Now it is grasped by strong men, standing deep amid the roaring flood ; back the wave rolls with awful force ; and but for the ropes which secure those brave men to the shore, their destruction is inevitable. Another moment, and the spar with its precious burden is lifted bodily and carried high up the beach —snatched from the devouring flood—from the very jaws of death.

"The hermit—a sailor—a woman—are saved!" broke in wild acclamation from a thousand voices, as their three apparently lifeless bodies were loosed from the spar, and carried on stretchers to the nearest houses, followed by crowds of weeping, sympathizing women, and many not less feeling-hearted men ; while the greater number remained on the beach

to await the not less exciting event of the breaking up of the hull of the vessel, and sharing in the much-coveted plunder which was soon to lie scattered along the beach.[1]

"Oh, care an' düle, care an' düle!" mournfully soliloquised old Yacob, as he assisted to carry his friend from the beach to his own house—"I kent weel dis wid happen, bit he widna be appered ;[2] an' noo, puir man, he's casen awa his ain life, an' no düne muckle gude idder ; fir, ales! I doot dey twa püir craeturs dat's been brocht ashore 'ill never come back ta dis warld agen. Oh, da dangers o' da sea! da weary, weary sea! Ales! ales! I winder whaur my puir bairn can be wi' sic a tempest as dis has been ; shürely, shürely, dem dat's upo' da laand, and hes a rüif ower der head, an' soond sleep i' der bed, hes muckle ta be tankful fir, tho' dey sud eat sparely an' cled barely at times."

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[1] See Note R. Wreckers. [2] Prevented.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Turn, Angelina, ever dear,
My charmer turn and see
Thy own, thy own, thy long-lost Edwin here,
Restored to love and thee.

GOLDSMITH.

THE mournful procession now reached old Yacob's door, and was met by Peggy, who, notwithstanding her generally unbending and unlovable nature, was much moved by the sad spectacle before her; for the hermit's cheek was pale and blanched, and his apparently lifeless body, like an ocean waif, was covered by froth and fragments of seaweed.

"O, püir bodie, püir bodie," she murmured, "get him tae da fire, an' get warm blankets aboot him, an' he'll mebbe come ta life yet; an' get oot da Yule bottle, Yacob, an' mak a drap o' het punch, an' try an' get it doon wi' him. Ales! ales a me! little ken I whaur my bairn is; mebbe, fir oucht I ken, some ane hes da sam ta dü fir him da day. O dear a me! dear a me!" and Peggy took blankets from one of the wooden box-beds and spread them on the "restin'" chair, while Yacob, assisted by the other men who had helped to carry the hermit, divested him of his wet clothes, and supplied their place with garments of his own.

A blazing fire was on the hearth, and the hermit was quickly wrapped in the warm blankets, with the heavy bed-rug placed over him, then bottles of hot-water were placed at his feet, while the Yule bottle was cheerfully uncorked, and the warm mixture prepared as Peggy directed. Happily those humane and anxious efforts were at last crowned with success, and the hermit slowly revived, and the first words he was able

faintly to whisper were, "Where are the survivors of the wreck; and are they attended to?"

"Yea, yea, dat are dey, Mr Ollison," eagerly replied Yacob; "but ye maunna try an' speak muckle yet, ye're no able fir it; tho' it's just laek you, aye tinkin aboot idders, an' no carin' aboot yersell. The man bodie ye saved is in Tammie's hoose up by, an' weel taen care o', an' sae is da woman or lady, fir she's mair laek dat; shü's in Rasmie's neist door, an' dere's signs o' life in dem baith, da Lord be praised fir His mercies."

"Amen," sighed the hermit, as he clasped his hands, while his lips moved in silent prayer.

Old Yacob spoke truly, for Lelah Halcro and Captain Yunson, the only survivors of the "Ocean Spray," were ministered to by loving hearts and willing hands, and every effort made for their recovery, which the limited means of their humble but kindhearted attendants could afford.

As formerly mentioned, the "Ocean Spray," when caught in a hurricane near the coast of Shetland, tried to bear up for the sheltered bay of Levenwick; but just when off Trosswick, the vessel was struck by a tremendous wave, which carried away her bulwarks, and threw her on her beam-ends; and while thus drifting on a lee-shore, at the mercy of the wind and waves, the crew managed to cut away the masts and rigging, which allowed the vessel to right herself, and then they let go both anchors, in the hope that she might ride out the storm; but, owing to the great depth of water, the anchors had little or no hold, and their noble but now disabled bark therefore drifted helplessly on to destruction. Then the captain called all hands on the quarter-deck, and addressing them said, "Now, lads, it is all over with us; and therefore I need only say, it is every man for himself, and God for us all. I will remain with the vessel until I see the last of her, for the lady under my charge must have my attention as long as that can be of any avail. If, therefore,

you think you can save yourselves in the long-boat, I will not prevent you trying to do so, though I think the attempt is hopeless; so then, farewell, comrades! may we all meet in a better world, where the storms of life shall be no more known." So saying, the captain shook hands with them all, and the crew proceeded to launch the long-boat; but as the dismantled vessel was rolling helplessly in the deep trough of the sea, with her broadside to the waves, this was a work of great difficulty. At last, when the crew had all got into the boat, and just as they were trying to cast loose, a mighty wave broke over the ship, and, overwhelming the boat, every soul found a watery grave.

The captain then returned to the cabin, and, lifting the terrified and almost speechless Lelah in his arms, bore her to the deck; and then, as the vessel neared the rocks, he secured her and himself to the bowsprit—the rest is known to the reader.

Little dreamed those good Samaritans of the momentous issues which trembled in the balance, as they watched by the couch on which lay the pale and prostrate form of Lelah Halcro. The feeble pulse throbbed, and then paused, and the lamp of life glimmered in the socket, as if it would go out for ever; but as the darkest hour is before the dawn, so the dawn of returning life in the bosom of Lelah Halcro was to usher in for her once more the day of happiness—the return of departed joys which had so long been shrouded in the darkness of sorrow.

It was not till Captain Yunson had regained consciousness, and was able to speak to those around him, that the villagers of Trosswick knew who Lelah was, and then surprise and joy was seen depicted on every countenance. But it was agreed by all that her life, as well as that of the hermit, depended on keeping them in ignorance of each other's presence, until such time as they would be able to bear the overwhelming transports of joy which their meeting must bring.

"Where am I?" faintly inquired Lelah, as she looked dreamily around on the strange faces which surrounded her couch.

"Ye're in your ain native laand, my bonnie lady," replied Mrs Rudderhead, approaching close to her patient's bedside; "bit, dear cratur, ye maunna try to spaek just yet, fir ye're odious weak; bit praise be ta da Lord dat ye're in life, fir nane o' wis tocht dat ye wid ever come dis lent."

"Yes, I thank God for my deliverance," faintly murmured Lelah, as she clasped her hands in the attitude of prayer; and then again, after a pause, she enquired, "What is the name of this place, and can you tell me if the captain or any of the crew are saved?"

"Yea, Lord be praised, the captain is saved," replied Mrs Rudderhead, "bit a da rest o' da crew is lost, mem, fir naethin' bit a miracle cud save ony cratur in sic a fearful tempest. Dis place, lammit, is a lang wy fae your ain hame, bit ye'll be pitten dere safe an soond as shüne as ye're able to muve aboot."

"Thank you, kind friend," faintly replied Lelah, as she again closed her eyes, for she felt she was not able to dwell upon the thought that she was once more in her native land, much less could she think of the renewal of sorrow which such a visit might bring with it.

"How is the captain, and has he been able to see his wife yet?" anxiously enquired the hermit of Yacob as the latter stood by his bedside.

"Na, no he, Mr Ollison," replied Yacob, "bit we're hoopin' he'll be able ta see her da morn's efternüin, an' if shü's able ta be upo' her feet, dey're baith comin' ta see you; fir dey're just oot o' a patience ta tank you, as dey're tanked da Lord already, fir savin' der lives in sic a wy as ye did, fir da laek wis never heard or seen in da isle o' Shetland afore, an' winna be forgotten as lang as ony ane is alive dat saw it."

"I shall rejoice to see them," replied the hermit, little

dreaming of the sense in which this prediction was to be so truly verified.

While old Yacob spoke, he could scarcely conceal his emotion. The thought that his friend the hermit was so very near his long-lost Lelah, and yet not to know it, nor be able to receive the intelligence, was overwhelming, and every moment seemed an age, until the happy meeting should take place.

Old Yacob only knew Captain Yunson as the captain of the shipwrecked vessel, for years had so changed the appearance of the latter, that neither his father nor mother could recognize him; and he thought it wise to conceal his relationship from them until he had fully recovered. It was known, however, in the village that his name was Yunson, but that being a common name in the islands, no one had any reason to suppose that he was old Yacob's son. The hermit had come to the very natural conclusion, that the lady he was the means of saving was the captain's wife; and for reasons already explained, old Yacob felt the necessity of saying nothing which could alter this opinion in the hermit's mind, until it was safe to allow their meeting together to take place.

On the evening of the third day after the wreck of the "Ocean Spray" had strewed the rocky beach of Trosswick,—her valuable cargo of tobacco, gin, and other Dutch commodities forming a rich prize to the islanders, who looked upon it as their lawful right,—the low slanting rays of the sun gilded the Ness, and nature breathed in soft repose, while the murmur of the yet restless waves fell mournfully on the ear, as they sullenly broke along the distant cliffs.

It was then that Lelah Halcro, leaning on the arm of Captain Yunson, directed her steps to old Yacob's dwelling. She looked pale and anxious, but her native beauty shone out in all its loveliness, for she wore a rustic dress which had been supplied to her by her kind hostess, and this seemed to enchance or bring back that charming simplicity of manner and artless

modesty which those who formerly knew her could so well remember.

As they approached old Yacob's cottage, Peggy occupied her accustomed seat in the high-backed "straen" chair, while the hermit sat in the arm-chair on the opposite side of the fire, and old Yacob paced the floor with hurried steps, breathing heavily, and showing other symptoms of extreme agitation; for he knew of Lelah's approaching visit, and every moment to him seemed an age.

"Sit dee doun, Yacob," said Peggy in a half angry tone, "an' spaek ta da jantleman, an' no geng figin' aboot da hoose yon wy, blawin' an puffin' like a pellick, as if dy judgment had left dee."

To this Yacob replied not, for at that moment Captain Yunson and Lelah entered, and as they advanced through the narrow entrance between the two wooden dormitories, the hermit rose to meet them, and Yacob in a tremulous voice said, "I needna tell you, Mr Ollison, wha dis is dat's come ta see you."

The hermit shook hands with Captain Yunson, and then gently taking Lelah's hand in his, he gazed for a moment in her face, and then exclaimed, in a wild and piercing cry, which sent a thrill to every heart, "My God, my Lelah!" and they were instantly locked in each other's arms. The scene was so touching, so overwhelming, that old Yacob sobbed aloud like a child, and the captain turned his face to the wall to hide the tears that flowed fast down his weather-beaten cheek. Peggy sprang to her feet, uttering a kind of mournful croon, while she ran to the hevel daffock[1] for a little water to sprinkle on Lelah's face, for the latter had fainted away in the hermit's arms. In a few moments she revived, and, then raising her soft loving eyes, brimful of tears, looked in the hermit's face, and throwing her arms around his neck, sobbed aloud in transports of joy.

[1] Water-pail.

The hermit now led Lelah to a seat on the settle by the fireside, soothing her with words of fond affection, and trying to suppress, as far as he could, his own emotion. The captain also stepped forward, and taking Peggy's withered hand in his, and looking enquiringly into her face, said, "Do you not know me?"

"Na, na, Lord ken o' you, sir, fir I ken you no," replied Peggy; "bit nae maiter fir dat, ye're wilcome here as if ye hed a been my ain an' only bairn dat's been lang fae me, an' dat mebbe I'll never see agen in dis life. Lord open your wy afore you, an' bring you safely to your ain hame, fir ye're brocht joy ta mony a sorrowful hert in bein' da means o' bringin dis dear cratur ta her ain native laand."

"Mother, can't you recognize your own Tom?" said the captain, and his voice quivered as he spoke.

"O my son!" shrieked the old woman, as she locked her arms around his brawny shoulders with a deathlike grasp, and then fainted away. Old Yacob also threw his arms round his son's neck, while the latter supported his mother in his arms till she came to herself.

This touching scene was scarcely over, when Lelah's father and mother arrived. Then followed another scene still more affecting if possible than that which preceeded it; for Lelah was to them as one risen from the dead, and then tears of joy fell fast while they pressed her to their bosoms with all the yearning tenderness of parental love.

As soon as tears were dried and some degree of composure obtained, old Yacob brought out the Yule bottle, and Peggy devoted her attention to the teapot, also preparing pancakes, fresh eggs, and rich butter (for her butter profit had been recovered by the use of a new charm), and when all was ready, the happiest company sat around old Yacob's humble festive board that ever shared his hospitality.

"Eh, Mr Ollison, what a day is dis ta mind apon," said old Yacob, when he had an opportunity to speak to the hermit

alone. "I kent lang sin syne dere wis sontin winderful gaen ta happen, an' ye'll mind dat I said sae in your ain hoose. Shürely, shürely, muckle raisin hes every ain o' 'is to say wi' Dauvid, 'Let us praise da Lord fir his goodness, and fir his wonderful works unto da children o' men.' O, dear-a-me! ta tink, efter sic a life o' separation an' sorrow as ye're baith hed, ta meet agen in dis world, an' fir my ain son ta come back agen in sic a winderful wy till his ain native place: its shürely an truly da Lord's düins, an' mervelous in our eyes. Aye, as da paraphrase says, 'da hallowed morn sall chase awa da sorrows o' da night,' an' as da sorrows o' da nicht o' affliction is noo chased awa fae wir herts, an' da gledsome sunshine o' hop an' happiness agen glintin' brightly ower wir heads, sae may wir herts owerflow wi' gratitude, an' wir days, few or mony as dey be, may dey be hallowed in da service o' Him wha's mercy is abüne a' his idder warks, an' nae mercy cud a come ta me mair joyful den da shange dat's come ower wir Peggy sin dis ship wis wracked. It lüiks as if da storm dat blew da püir ship apo' da rocks o' Trosswick hed blawn every breath o' flytin' oot o' Peggy's body; an' Lord keep it sae, if it's no feyness wi' her! Eh, Mr Ollison, if shü hed aye been as güid as shü's been dis efternüin, auld Yacob's head widna been sae muckle laek a lint tap as it is da day."

To these impressive and touching remarks the hermit was about to reply, when some one announced at the door that the horse was ready which was to convey Lelah to her father's house. The happy company therefore broke up, and Lelah was placed on horseback, and accompanied on her way home by her father and mother, and a large number of friends and villagers who joined in the joyful procession.

The hermit returned once more to his hut on the Ness, no longer to sit solitary by its lonely hearth, but to plan arrangements for fulfilling those engagements which a new and happy era in his life now rendered necessary.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The bride she cometh into the hall,
Red as a rose is she.
COLERIDGE.

Two short weeks passed, and the herald of day, one December morning, came forth in rosy smiles, and casting his slanting mellow rays athwart the frost-bespangled earth, made it sparkle and twinkle in serene beauty, like a field of countless diamonds. The sparrows on housetop and hedge chirped in unusually clear and musical notes, and the circling flocks of fluttering cushats appeared like queens from fairy-land, all dressed in honour of some great event, for their necks gleamed in the sunshine in colours of the richest hues of green and gold, and their soft eyes sparkled with a darker and more beautiful lustre than usual. And why was all this? Why were nature's children in such a state of preparation and expectation? Just because a wedding company was about to walk in procession to the manse of Skelaburg. The bridesmaids, all blooming and rosy, their gay muslin caps trimmed with a profusion of red and blue ribbon, while the bridegroom's men were all dressed in their best, and as fine strapping fellows as ever were reared upon the "Lot o' Huandal."

There they start. The bride wears a pure white silk dress and gay cap, which is more profusely adorned with ribbon than the rest. Her smile is of surpassing sweetness, and her matchless beauty is the wonder and admiration of all beholders. The bridegroom walks with a bold elastic step, his elegant dress and polished manners indicating his superior rank in life.

Eager and smiling groups crowd at every cottage-door to gaze at the procession as it passes, and the merry music of the

fiddle comes thrilling on the calm sunny air, as the fiddler, leading the way a few yards in advance, plays the half joyous, half melancholy air of the "Bride's March," the words being—

> Now must I leave both father and mother,
> Now must I leave both sister and brother,
> Now must I leave both kith and kin,
> An' follow the fate o' a frem'd man's son.

The gunner follows at the same distance in the rear, and ever and anon sends out a tiny puff of blue curling smoke, while the report of his gun echoes in loud crackle amongst the stone dykes and "fairy knowes" which skirt the path.

Need the reader be told that the hermit of Trosswickness and his fair Lelah are the happy bride and bridegroom in this happy marriage procession, and the venerable minister of the parish is about to tie the indissoluble knot of their happiness, as soon as the company shall assemble in his front dining-room, which has got an extra dusting and sorting-up for the occasion?

It was indeed a rare circumstance for a marriage ceremony to be performed in this apartment, the kitchen being always used for that purpose; and this circumstance was a source of great satisfaction to the worthy pastor, for he attributed in no small degree, the stability and permanency of his work to the domesticating influence which the savoury smells and "feast of fat things" in his capacious kitchen exercised over the devotees at Hymen's altar. He could point proudly to the work of thirty long years, during which innumerable knots had been tied in that homely and comfortable culinary apartment, and not in a single instance had ever the fastening slipped, until the material itself was reduced to the condition of "old junk," while many elegant and highly finished knots done in the drawing-room and in the decorated hall, had "pulled through" under the first strain.

As soon as the ceremony was over the procession again formed, and the well-rosined bow drew from the merry and sympathetic fiddle the joyous marching strains of

"Wooed an' married an' a',"

until arriving at the house of the bride's father, where the company halted on the green to witness the ceremony of breaking the bride's-cake. This hymeneal bakement was no pyramid of ornamental sugar, surmounted by satin flags and silver-gift flowers, but a plain home-made oatcake, which, being broken in fragments in a basket, and thrown over the bride's head, were eagerly picked up by the lads and lasses to place under their pillows at night, when each hoped to see in dreamland the image of a future bridegroom.[1]

Inside the cottage all was bustle and preparation for prolonged festivities.[2] Large peat-fires, "but" and "ben," blazed on the hearth, and whole quarters of smoke-dried mutton, "reisted" geese, and pork hams, were served up in large wooden Norway plates, scrubbed and polished for the occasion. On groaning tables rose towers and pyramids of "burstan brünies," "beremeal bannocks," "saft scones" and "hard scones,"—a large proportion of which was contributed by the "auld folk," for no heads of families, invited to a wedding, would have accepted the invitation without bringing along with them a suitable present in the shape of food supplies.

As soon as the company were seated, and the clatter of plates and knives, with the muffled hum of half-articulated sentences, showed that there were no idlers at the festive board, brimming "remicles" of home-brewed ale, and newly broached kegs of smuggled Dutch gin, were brought in, and

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[1] See Note S. "Bridecake."

[2] Up to the beginning of the present century, it was customary in Shetland to continue a wedding for three or four days and nights, and sometimes for a whole week.

flowing bumpers in horn and glass were quaffed in native fashion, while homely toasts and witty jokes went round; and all this 200 miles from the nearest exciseman. No wonder a huge bonfire blazed on the Wart, and that loud laughter and merry music made the reek-stained rafters of old Eric Halcro's cottage dirl with the glorious din.

It was when the "seven starns"[1] twinkled over a point on Noness Head, marking the hour of 10 o'clock, that the fiddler again opened his reek-stained riddle-case, and enlivened the scene by playing "Wooed and Married an' a'," "Saw ye my Pot-Ladle?" and other appropriate airs. At 12 o'clock, the whole company proceeded to the barn—the fiddler leading the way. This primitive ball-room had been swept and garnished for the occasion, and the sheaves of black-oats snugly and evenly arranged in one end, so as to form a convenient resting-place for tired dancers or onlookers. One lamp in the kiln-door, and six "lowing' collies" swinging from as many rafters, sent out a blaze of light which illuminated every part of the barn.

Now the fiddler mounts the steps of the kiln-door, and taking his seat on the second from the top—

> "Screws his pins and plinks his strings,
> An' rubs his bow wi' roset,"

and then strikes up the appropriate reel of "Mally, put the kettle on." Soon as the soul-stirring music thrills on the ear, eight merry dancers spring to the floor. "Reel!" cries the leader of the dance, and round they wheel through a figure of 8. Then, partners opposite, they tread to a measure in quick step, silver-buckled shoes and woollen "smucks" beating the earthen floor in rapid and well-timed thuds.

There, on the right, is the queen of the ball—the bride herself, in all her queenly beauty and polished grace, her

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[1] Pleiades.

charming native simplicity enchanced by the rustic costume she wears, for she has laid aside her bridal attire, that she may more fully and freely participate in the nuptial rejoicings now begun, and make her brides'-maids feel that she is as one of themselves. Her partner opposite is no longer the dreaded and awe-inspiring recluse of Trosswickness, but a happy bridegroom in the full glory of his manhood. His countenance beams with joy as he gazes on his lovely bride, no phantom now in dreamland to mock him with unreal bliss, but his own loving and long-lost Lelah. Lightly he skims though the reel, merrily he steps the dance, his silver-buttoned jerkin, and knee-breeches of Flemish cloth, showing off his handsome figure to great advantage. His hair, which once fell in wild confusion around his shoulders, is now twisted in the handsome queu of the period, bound with silken cord, and decorated with blue ribbon. Next the bridegroom, and no less nimble in his step, dances Johnnie o' Greentaft, with his partner and future bride, bonnie Annie Leslie. Next is Captain Yunson, who has chosen for his partner Jeannie o' Voe, and a handsome couple they are ; and last, but not least, in the foursome reel, is Lowrie o' Lingigirt and Girzie o' Glufftown, soon to dance more merrily at their own wedding.

Now faster and faster the fiddler's elbow flies as the merry bow trembles on each sympathetic string, and thrills out the foot-inspiring strain, and faster and faster the dancers trip on "the light fantastic toe," and wheel in giddy flight, crying "Houch !" "Reel !" "Success ta da bride an' bridegrüm," and "Success ta da fiddler." At last the knight of the bow gallantly gives the kissing signal, which he does by drawing his bow quickly across the strings behind the bridge, and giving a shrill sound or squeak, imitative of a kiss, and then "Kiss da lasses !" is repeated by four voices, while four arms encirle four necks, and four smacks are distinctly heard.

The reel being ended, eight tired dancers recline on the

sheaves, while other eight take their places on the floor; and after all the "young folk" have had their turn in the same order of precedence as they walked in procession to the manse, old Eric, as Master of Ceremonies, enters the barn, carrying a brimming "remicle" of ale, followed by the best man carrying a keg of Dutch gin, and the bride's mother a large straw-basket full of oat-cakes, pancakes, ale-horns and dram-glasses.

"Noo, folk, come an' hae a dram an' a bite, an' den ye can dance agen," says old Eric, as "remicle," keğ, and basket are deposited on an old oak table placed at one side of the barn.

"Here's ta da bride an' da bridegrüm's helt," resounds on all sides, as horns and glasses are drained, and then filled, and emptied again—to "da fiddler's helt," and "da company's helt a-roond."

The repast being over, loud calls were made for the "auld folks'" reels, and four venerable pairs at once took the floor. At "da head o' da flüir" was old Yâcob and Peggy; next them Eric Halcro and his wife Medgie; then Tammie Toughlands and his wife Joan; and last, Rasme Rudderhead, and his wife Doratty.

The fiddler plays up "Saw ye my Pot-ladle?" a slow and appropriate reel, and away the dancers skip; four red night-caps, with ribbon-tied tails streaming behind, chase four large high-crowned white muslin "toys" till partners opposite, and then the red "tapped" night-caps and muslin "toys" go bobbing up and down as fast as the fiddler's elbow follows his bow.

"Dance, Peggy, dance," cries Yacob, as he merrily pats the barn-floor in his well-quilted "smucks,"[1] his honest face radiant with smiles, and his aged yet manly form encased in a new suit of *wadmal*—teased, carded, spun, and sewed by his venerable partner opposite.

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[1] A sort of woollen "carpets" or sandals, formerly worn by natives of Shetland.

"Dance, Yacob, dance!" screams Peggy, as in "high jinks" she flings herself right and left, and gives a see-saw motion with her head and arms, as if she supposed herself the veritable pot-ladle at work, which the fiddler is musically enquiring after.

"Naebody deein' da nicht, Mr Ollison," whispers old Yacob, with suppressed merriment, as he skips past where the bridegroom is seated on the sheaves, and jerks out his thumb towards Peggy, who was skipping through the dance before him.

"Naebody laek a beddral da nicht, Mr Ollison," more audibly whispers Yacob, as the reel again brings him back to the sheaves, and upon which he rolls in a fit of smothered laughter, his face expanding into a round rosy disc, like a frosty moon, and his fat sides, shaking under his two broad hands, which he holds on tightly to lessen the strain on his diaphragm. "Naebody yatterin' noo," he again screams out, as the tears roll over his cheeks, and this fit of laughing is succeeded by a fit of coughing which threatens to end tragically.

"Be no a füle, Yacob," cries Peggy, as she foots away by herself, opposite Yacob's empty place. "Come awa noo, Yacob—reel," again cries Peggy, as Yacob quickly recovers the use of his faculties, and his place on the floor at the same time. Old Yacob's hilarity on this occasion arose from three causes. First, certain horns of home-brewed ale and glasses of Dutch gin, which had made him "as happy as a king;" second, Peggy's appearance in general, and her *step* in particular; and third, the contrast between her normal condition at home and her abnormal condition at the wedding.

On still went the old folks' reel, but slower and slower the red night-cap nodded to the white muslin "toys," and slower and slower the sympathizing fiddler drew the bow, till at last "kiss da lasses" was screeched out behind the bridge, and four red night-caps disappeared inside four muslin toys, and

four *soughs* were heard; but whether it was the wind whistling, or "*auld folks kissin'*," there was no time left to inquire, for at that moment loud calls were made for the Bride's Reels, and eight bonny lasses stepped on the floor, as the fiddler played up

"The Scallaway Lasses."

Like seven queen bees chasing one butterfly, seven bride's-maids followed the bride, skimming in giddy flight through the reel without stopping, until the report of a gun was heard outside, and then all eyes were turned towards the barn-door, and several voices shouted, "Da guisers, da guisers!" as the "scuddler" or captain entered with three of his men. The former was dressed in straw kilt, with tippet and high conical hat of the same material, but profusely decorated with ribbon. His face was covered with a blue veil, and in his hands he carried a "bent" brush with a long handle, which he twirled about with great velocity, making a snoring noise, and producing a similar sound through his nose. This he did as he shuffled along the floor, followed by his men, who were all dressed like their captain, excepting the large bunch of ribbon or favour which the latter wore at the apex of his hat.

After going through various pantomimic performances, and chasing the girls around the barn with their brushes, the guisers laid aside their weeping implements, and prepared for the dance, the captain leading out the bride, and his men choosing their partners; and after all the bride's-maids had danced, the guisers drank the bride and bridegroom's health in silence, quaffing the liquor through their veils, and then making their exit *incognito*.

The bride and bridegroom now retired, leaving the rest of the company to continue the merriment till "the cock wis crawin'," and then many a tired dancer reclined in primitive innocence on the sheaves; and, by the passport of a fragment

of oatcake beneath the cereal pillow, roamed through dreamland in quest of future brides and bridegrooms.

In the kiln door the fiddler reposed in deep slumber beside his fiddle, snoring unmusical bass, and mumbling dreamy toasts to visions of brimming horns of nut-brown ale, and flowing glasses of Holland gin.

At nine o'clock the company assembled for breakfast, and at ten o'clock the dancing was resumed, and so continued for three days and nights, with intervals of playing at football, or running "comalae" on the green.

On the fourth day, the young men held the "weddin' treat," which was simply continuing the marriage festivities and rejoicings for another day and night; and this they did at their own expense, as an expression of their goodwill toward the newly married couple, and also as a return for the liberal entertainment which had been provided for all the wedding-guests.

On the morning of the fifth day, after paying the fiddler, and distributing among the poor of the district numerous baskets of fragments from the festive board, the company broke up, and all returned to their respective homes, to live in happy anticipation of the next wedding to take place in the district.

What now remains of the strange and evenful history of the Hermit of Trosswickness and his fair Lelah, is soon told, and must rejoice the reader's heart, for the sun of prosperity had now arisen upon their path, and a happy future was before them, to compensate for all past sorrows and suffering.

After remaining a few days with his father-in-law, the Laird of Noss (no longer "The Hermit"), accompanied by his wife and Captain Yunson, proceeded to Lerwick, intending to sail by the first vessel leaving for Holland; for it was Lelah's earnest desire to visit without delay her kind benefactresses, Widow Vanderboor and her daughter, and to convey to them an account of all that had befallen her since her sudden departure from them.

Arriving at Lerwick, they were so fortunate as to find the "Vanderstein" of Yesselmonde lying wind-bound for Holland, and in this vessel they at once embarked.

Three days of a fair wind brought them in sight of the Dutch coast; and after other three days, they arrived at the house of Widow Vanderboor, where they were received with unbounded joy, and entertained in high festival for many days in the midst of a brilliant assembly; parting again with many regrets.

On returning to the coast, Captain Yunson obtained command of a vessel bound for Scotland, and therefore invited Lelah and her husband to accompany him, arranging to land them at Lerwick before proceeding to his port of destination.

After an equally prosperous voyage the vessel arrived in Lerwick, and the Laird of Noss and his happy wife proceeded to their future home, which was in Bressay, there to enjoy the happiness which now awaited them.

Nor in his day of prosperity did the "Hermit of Trosswickness" forget those whom duty or affection brought to his remembrance.

Rasmie Rudderhead and Tammie Toughlands were put in possession of farms on his property.

By his kindness and liberality, old Yacob's declining years were rendered happy, and this happiness increased as Peggy's failing strength tended to bring about a change for the better in her walk and conversation—the latter, however, continuing many years after the former had ceased.

Bawby o' Brigstanes kept up her merry evening gatherings to the last, liberally supported alike by old and young—the former for matrimonial favours experienced, the latter for similar favours expected; and lastly, the Laird of Noss, in the spirit of David when he said, "Is there yet any remaining of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's

sake?" sought out some distant relations of Bill Ericson's, and bestowed upon them many marks of his favour.

During the future years in the life of the Laird of Noss and his happy wife they made an annual journey to Dunrossness, visiting the old retreat on the Ness, the trysting-place by the shore, and other scenes of their former joys and sorrows; and often by the domestic hearth were those scenes recalled to memory, when a cherub occupant of the cradle was hushed to peaceful slumber by a mother's voice singing

"The Exile's Lament."

JAMIE AND JEANIE.

[A SHETLAND STORY IN VERSE.]

I MIND it was the first o' voar,
The day was cauld an' raw,
An' everything luiked blate ta me
When Jamie güed awa'.

I stood an' saw him leave the hoose
An' wi' 'im his sisters three ;
His widow-midder greetin' sair,
For nane she had but he.

They followed him a piece awa',
An' then they had to part ;
He kissed his sisters ane an' a',—
But, O, the midder's hert !

She held him lang, she kissed him aft,
Her very hert did yearn ;
An' aye she cried, "What sall I dü ?
My bairn, O, my bairn !"

But he büst tear himsel' awa',
He could nae langer bide,
His hert wis like ta brack in twa
Wi' grief he couldna hide.

O ! muckle did I envy them
That could sae greet their fill,—
That could mak' maen an' get relief,
An' a' their sorrow tell.

Wir folk kent no that Jamie had
Sae lang been coortin' me,
Nor kent they why I luiked sae sad
For Jamie gaen ta sea.

I stood afore my fedder's door
Till he cam' through the gait,
His bonnet drawn doon ower his broo,
His look sae wae an' blate.

He sabbéd as he gript my hand
An' said, "Noo, Jeannie, try;"
A stang güed through my heart, I sooned
An' gae'd a fearfu' cry.

Wir folk ran furt, they took me in,
They laid me on my bed;
They drappit water on my broo
Ta cüil my burnin' head.

An' mony days an' nichts I gret,
An' nane could comfort me;
For, O ! my heart wi' langer ached
For Jamie at the sea.

At last a letter fae him cam',
A seal it had o' blue,
An' twa hearts stampéd on the wax
Ta mean he still was true.

I mind when I saw "Posty" come,
My heart began ta beat;
I flang my spade inta da rig
An' hurried up the gaet.

I got the letter in my hand,
I sat doon on a brae,
I read it ower an' ower again
An' dell'd nae mair dat day.

Sae letters güed and letters cam'
For years atween us twa,
An' this wis a' my happiness
When Jamie wis awa'.

Fae Jack-afore-the-mast he raise
Through time ta be a mate,
An' then he got a ship himsel',—
They caed his ship the Kate.

She was a thoosan' tons, he said,
Bound for the Southern Sea;
An' when he back ta England wan,
He'd come and marry me.

A year an' mair haed come an' gane,
Bit nae wird cam' ta me;
An' I began ta fear the warst
For Jamie at the sea.

And then another year güed by,
A weary year ta me;
A year o' mournin' day and night—
Ah, nane could comfort me!

My face that folk eens caed sae fair,
Was noo baith wan an pale ;
I wandered here, I wandered there,
My health began ta fail.

At last the woeful letter cam'—
A letter sealed wi' black—
An' Jamie's midder's name an' place
Was written on the back.

This letter fae da owners wis—
The owners o' the Kate—
They said they grieved ta tell da news,
But noo were forced ta state

That on a coral reef she struck,
Far in the Southern seas—
That gallant ship that braved sae lang
The battle and the breeze.

And savage tribes, the men they slew
Soon as they reached the shore ;
The captain and his gallant crew,
Alas ! they were no more !

The postman kent the dreadful news,
An' took the letters doon
Ta Saunders Broon, o' Burrabraes,
The elder o' the toon.

An' he wi' him twa neebours took,
He couldna geng alane,
For weel he kent what they would see
Would melt a heart o' stane.

They cam in slowly ower the flüir
An' slowly set them doon ;
But e'er they spak' a wird she cried,
"O Saunders, Saunders Broon !

O, weel I ken the news ye're brought,
My bairn is no more ;
Sae tell me whaur his body lies,
Is it by sea or shore ?"

Auld Saunders tried ta sooth her woe
By comfort from on high ;
But "Jamie, Jamie, O my bairn !"
Was aye the midder's cry.

Auld Saunders telled her trials here
Was future joy to earn ;
But still the midder's wailin' cry
Was "Jamie, O, my bairn !"

An' then the wird it cam' ta me,
"A bruiséd reed to break,"
An' like a widdered blade o' girse
I sank beneath the straik.

An' barely hed I gained the strent
Ta let me raise my head ;
When my dear faeder suddenly
Was numbered wi' the dead.

An' then there was nane left ta wirk,
Baith oot and in, but me,
For mam was ill and a' the boys
Had left and gaen ta sea.

An' sae I hed ta rise an wirk,
I couldna lie an' dee,
Although I often wissed the Lord
Wid tak' baith mam an' me.

We tried ta dü the best we could,
We kept the bit o' land,
An' span and cairded noo an' then,
An' wrought inta wir hand.

Until an awful puir year cam',
The crop was ill an' sma.
An' for the rent the laird he cam
An' took wir coo awa'.

An' then we thought ta gie it up,
An' dü without the land,
An just help neebors for a mite,
An' wirk within wir hand.

But just afore we set it aff,
Ae day comes steppin' in
Auld Willie Widd, a widow man,
That lived inta the Linn.

He luikéd at me sae curiously
An' said, "Weel, Jeannie, lass,
I hear ye're gain awa' frae here
Just noo, at Hallimas?

"I dinna like the news ava;
An' sae I cam' alang
Ta say a wird or twa ta dee,
An' hoop I dü nae wrang.

"I hae an aer o' siller by,
An' havers kye in Bü,
Wi' ewes an' gimmers in da hill,
An' am richt weel ta dü.

"Dy midder's auld, doo's lonely here,
Dü kens, lass, what I mean,
Sae bide nae langer here ava,
But come wi' me ta Linn."

Weel, first I leuch an' then I gret,
For lauchin' was a sin;
But just ta tink me marryin' auld
Deezed Willie o' the Linn!

But little kent we what ta dü,
The roup was adverteezed,
An' though the bodie was three score
He wasna just sae deezed.

I cared na for mysel' a preen,
I could just work or dee,
But my puir midder, auld an' frail,
Was what sae troubled me.

An' sae ta mak' a lang tale short,
I büst at last gie in
An' marry—O, dear, dear-a-me!
Auld Willie o' the Linn!

Neist Saterday, I mind it weel,
Was set for wir contrack,
An' though I tried ta luik weel-pleased,
My heart was like ta brak.

For O ! my Jamie cam' in view
As he was wint ta be ;
An' aye I thought I heard him sayin'
" Is dis dy love for me ? "

At supper time, when folk was blyde,
I just was clair ta greet ;
When, comin' ower the hard brig-stanes,
I heard somebody's feet.

The door it opened, O, great Lord !
What tink ye should I see,
But my ain Jamie comin' in—
My Jamie frae the sea ?

I screeched, I flew aroond his neck,
He did the same ta me ;
An' aye I cried, " Is it dy ghost,
Or Jamie, is it dee ?

" Is this a dream, or is it true ?
O, wonderous strange return ! "
" An' sae it is," Auld Willie said,
" But I'll just ca' da morn."

Auld Willie güed, the rain cam' on
An' wet him to the skin,
An' sae I wat he wasna blyde
When he got ta the Linn.

But neist day back he comes an' says,
" Noo, Jeannie, hear doo me !
Although I'm vexed I'm blyde ta see
Dy Jamie hame ta dee.

" We wir contracked ta be shure,
Bit in dat is nae sin,
Sae doo's as free ta tak dy Jem
As I'm ta geng ta Linn.

" But neist time I contrack agen,
May auld Deil cripple me
If shü sall hae, if I ken o' it,
A Jamie at the sea.

" My pouch has paid weel fir a foy
Dat's dune nae güid ta me ;
' Ane braks da bane anidder sooks
Da mergie o' it,' ye see.

" Bit Deil may care, I hae aneuch,
An' mair I still can win,
My haavers kye can pay it a',
No coontin' dem at Linn.

Sae let it geng—wir spoilt contrack
Can just stand fir your ain ;
He's lookin' weel, but houp I'll no
Agen be drook't wi' rain."

An sae awa auld Willie güid,
(There's warr auld men than he)
But I maun tell you Jamie's news,
An' hoo he cam' ta me.

His crew was killed, as wird first cam,
But he alane wis spared,
The savage chief expectin' shüne
Ta get a rich reward

Fae some ship comin' past dat wy
Fae his ain kuntrie ;
An' sae they keept him prisoner
An' widna lat him free.

Bit efter lang an weary years
The tribe they güid ta war,
An' Jamie gettin' aff ae night
Swam right across da bar.

He seized a canoe that he saw
Lyin' anchored in the bay,
An' got far oot o' sight o' land
Afore the brack o' day.

He rowed an' rowed, he kent na whaur,
Far ower a trackless sea,
Until he came close to an isle
They ca'd Oohytee.

But nae inhabitants were there,
Just cocoa-nuts it grew,
Wi' fish an' birds alang the coast,
An' birds in thousands flew.

Sae 'shore he cam, and set to wirk
Like Robinson Crusoe,
Fir that sam day he fan' a wrack
Just lyin' intil a goe.

He bigged a hut, he made a boat,
An' planted neeps a' kael ;
An' cocoa-nuts eneuch he had,
They saired for bread an' mael.

An' mony years this wy he lived,
Until a ship cam' by
An' took him wi' his guids an' gear
Inta the Colonie.

An' there he sell'd his nits an' oil,
His feathers white an' grey ;
An' hame he cam' to marry me.
O blissin's on the day

That saw my Jamie back ta me,
My Jamie fae the sea ;
O may I ever praise the Lord
Fir a' his gifts tae me.

His midder noo is auld an' frail,
My midder's laek ta dee,
Bit lang in comfort at wir fire
They've been wi' Jem an' me.

An' bonnie bairns ca's me mam,
We're happy as can be ;
Fir O ! the difference is great
Sin' Jamie cam' fae sea.

THE LAIRD O' ST RINGAN.

[A SHETLAND BALLAD.]

THE young laird o' St Ringan was a weel-faured youth,
An' a weel-faured youth was he;
But fausely vowed he to sweet Lily o' the Glen,
"My bride and my darling ye'll be."

"O dinna spaek dis wy, young laird o' St Ringan,
O dinna spaek dis wy ta me;
For ye ken I'm but a simple, puir lass,
An' ye are o' high degree.

"Sae meet me nae mair alane i' the mirk,
For I'm feared fae dis evil may be;
But wed for your wife, wi' gowd an' wi' gear,
Some ladie o' high degree."

"O say ye no this, my ain winsome marrow,
O say ye no this ta me;
For nae ladie wi' gowd, nae ladie wi' gear,
Can I ever love like thee.

"Your cheek is like the red, red rose,
An' your milk-white skin fair ta see;
Your gowden hair hangs ta your middle sae jimp,
An' bright is the glisk o' your ee."

"O dinna spaek dis wy, young laird o' St Ringan,
O dinna spaek dis wy ta me;
For I hae nae gowd, an' I hae nae gear,
An' I'm but o' laigh degree.

"Your midder would flyte, young laird o' St Ringan,
Your sister would gloom upon me;
Your fedder, in wrath, his heir would disown,
If I your wife was ta be.

"Sae meet me nae mair alane i' the mirk,
For I'm feared fae dis evil may be;
But wed for your wife, wi' gowd an' wi' gear,
Some ladie o' high degree."

"O say ye no this, my ain winsome marrow,
O say ye no this ta me;
For when ye're my bride, in a ship on the tide,
We'll sail to some far countrie.

"My faither is auld an' winna live lang,
My mither, as weel, she maun dee;
My sister's anger ye need never mind,
When we come again ower the sea.

"An' then ye will be ladie St Ringan,
Weel buskit and braw as may be;
Wi' silks an' wi' satins, wi' pearlins an' a',
An' maidens ta wait upon thee."

His airm he's pat roond her middle sae jimp,
An' her sweet cherry lips did he pree;
An' syne doon they sat 'neath the sandy-knowe bank
That's close by the sound o' the sea.

* * * * * *

The lily grew wan, an' the lily grew pale,
An' the tear trickled fast fae her ee;
For the laird o' St Ringan sair had her beguiled,
An' the morn he's ta wed Margorie.

Lady Margorie was young an' sae was she fair,
An' pearlins and broaches hed she;
For her faither was laird o' a' Verndaal,
An' gowd in right plentie had he.

The Lily o' the Glen in the mirk, mirk night
Tae the yett cam', the laird for ta see;
When fast oot cam' he, sae gallant an' sae gay,
An' kissed her fu lovinglie.

"O geng ta yon gio, my ain winsome marrow,
Geng, wait at the strand, love, for me;
For the ship is noo come, an' her sails hysted up,
Ta tak' us awa' ower the sea."

Burd Lily hied her doon to the saut sea shore,
In a gio whaur nae body could see;
An' soon cam' the laird o' St Ringan there,
An' a right angry man was he.

"O why daured ye come this night to my yett,
Why winna ye bide far fae me?
For lady Marjorie maunna ken' o' your shame,
An' this is the night ye maun dee."

"O laird o' St Ringan, spare ye my life,
An' your ain young son, it may be;
An' makin' my moan, I'll beg for wir bread,
An' nae mair my face ye sall see."

He's tied a stane ta her lang yellow hair,
He's tied it wi' knots twa an' three ;
An' he's flung her into the ebbin' tide,
An' she sank awa' doon i' the sea.

The laird o' St Ringan hied him fast hame,
An' he drank the red wine cheerilie ;
For the morn, says he, is my wedding day,
An' I'll wed ladie Marjorie.

The laird o' St Ringan laid himsel doon,
An' a saft downy bowster had he ; pillow
But cauld was the weed that wrapped Lily's head,
In her bed whaur sea-tangles be.

The laird o' St Ringan slept, an' he dreamed,
Then waukened, an' up sprang he ;
For a voice fae the dead spak near ta his bed
In a soond like the moan o' the sea.

The laird o' St Ringan glowered in the dark,
An' a richt eldritch luik had he ;
For a ghaist a' in white stood afore him as bright
As the sheenin' mareel o' the sea.

Then oot spak the ghaist wi' a voice right howe
Like the wind when it soughs drearilie ;
" The bride will claim her right at this hour the next night,
An' the bridal sheets seaweed shall be."

The laird o' St Ringan louped oot o' bed, O Norse Hlaupa
An' he ca'ed for his servants three :
" Bring lowin' candles an' tell wha was here,"—
Says they, " It was nane o' we."

"Then kindle me a fire," said the laird o' St Ringan,
"Let it lowe up an' bleeze cheerilie;
For my bluid rins cauld wi' a right fearsome dream,
An' I'll wauk till the clock craws three."

They kindled up a fire o' the dry black peat,
An' it lowed up an' bleezed cheerilie;
But the lowe danced blue, and the ase turned red,
An' it whirled on the hearth strangelie.

The laird o' St Ringan luiked at the cat,
For she glowered wi' her een fearsomelie;
He luiked at the dog as he grued an' whinged,
For they saw what nae mortal could see.

The laird o' St Ringan clappit his hands,
An' he ca'ed for his servants three,
Sayin', "Bring the red wine an' sit by me here,
For I'll wauk till the cock craws three."

The servants they watched, an' the laird he drank
O' red wine till the cock crawed three;
Then ower did he fa' on the floor o' his ha',
An' there lay till the sun shone hie.

* * * * * *

Lady Marjorie was dressed in the satin sae white,
Wi' pearlins an' broaches fair ta see;
An' the bride, the bridegroom, the brides' maidens, an' a,
In the ha' were a grand companie.

The seven starns twinkled aboon i' da lift,
The moon in the sky shone hie;
An' the laird of St Ringan an' his bonnie bride
Left the ha' an' the gay companie.

In a chaumer they gaed, an' nae light was there
Save the light o' the moon that shone hie ;
" O come to my airms," cried the laird o' St Ringan,
" My ain bonnie bride, Marjorie."

He claspit a wraith, it was lifeless and cauld ;
On her lips was the foam o' da sea ;
In her long dreepin' hair was the slimy sea-ware
That grows on the flood skerrie.

A bairnie she clespit ta her breist sae cauld,
An' it shivered an' sabbed wearilie ;
An' its wan lips it pressed to the nourice cauld breast,
But nae milk had the nourice ta gie.

" O faither cruel, cauld, cauld is the bed
Ye hae made for my mither an' me ;
But in sheets o' sea-ware there's room an' to spare,
An' right weel sall they cover us three."

The bride in her chaumer saw a blue lowe,
An' a groan fae the bridegroom heard she ;
Then a weird sight she saw, like a black draigled craw,
Fleein' after twa ghaists ta da sea.

Ladie Marjorie now sits in the ha' by her lane,
An' a lane bride she ever maun be ;
For the bridegroom's asleep in a bed that lies deep,
An' in that cauld bed lies three.

MANSIE MUDJICK'S COURTSHIPS.

CHAPTER I.

Eh! It's an auld story noo an' no wirt hearin' apon, bit I'm shure if ye'ir pleased ta hear it I sall be ower blide ta tell you a' 'at I can mind apon. Weel, as I was gaen ta say, I niver wis muckle buik a' my days, bit tho' I say it mysel' (dat sudna say it) it wis guid what wis o' me; or as da auld sayin' is, "I wis peerie bit naetie." Still I maun confess dat ae cubit mair ta my statir wid a been a great service ta me, fir truly da want o' it haes been sair against me in mony wys baith by sea an' shore. Fir ae thing, I rowed tree year in a yole fir twenty-five shillins o' a fee whin muckle hoeborn slunges, a lock o' years younger den mysel', wir gettin' der thirty-five in a saxherrin'; an' if it haed na been my uncle's boat I mebbe widna a bün in a saxherrin' yet ta dis guid hoor an' day, altho', atween you an' me, if it wisna fir da name o' it, I carena muckle if I hedna bün in ane yet, fir ye see fir ae thing da room atween da tafts o' da saxherrin' is ower wide fir da lent o' my legs, sae dat I man aye set my feet against da edge o' da taft, or if I pit dem doon I maun hae a lin or a ballish stane ta set dem tü afore I can row a straik.

Dere wis ae day whin we wir andowin' ahead fir saith, wi' a hush o' sea on, an' I haed no a very richt grip fir my feet, Nickey Smith—ill tricked deevil as he wis—shived his aer annunder mine an' I güid back-ower curley-head-a-craw i' da fore shott an' dang up a lump ipa da back o' my head da size o' a hen's egg.

Yea, I'm truly hed a hantle ta pit up wi'! Just dis last simmer, ae vaige—whin we wir ipa da sooth grund, wi' da Nose

afore da skerry an' da Cüllie o' da Toog i' Meggie Morris' goe, he wis a hard tide an' da hoe just most undumious—I may say he just glaeped every huik as fast as dey gued ower da gunnel. Weel, as I wis gaein' ta say, we hed a heavy slush o' hoes i' da boat, an' efter we set aff fir a mornin' hail, I lays me doon i' da fore head i' da bight o' da sail, an' da nicht bein' warm I hedna my sea claes on bit just my claith jacket an' breeks. Weel, I sleeps awhile till I hears Rasmie o' Ootvoe roarin' "Rise, Mansie, an' hail." I tries ta jump up, bit deil fit can I budge ae wy or annidder. Dere's a weight apo me most winderfil. Tinks I, Lord be aboot me, is dis da nicht-mare, or what is it dat's come ower me noo? Sae I clears oot o' my een, when I sees mysel' kivered wi' hoes fae da croon o' da head ta da sole o' da fit. What hed da deevils düne, tink ye, bit hooked hoes inta my claes as tick as ane an' ane cood hing; an' sae, as ye may ken, I hed a bonny job afore I got mysel' clear o' dem again. O, its nae use o' spaekin'! Lord kens what maks folks torment da laek o' me, fir a thing we canna help. It's nae faut o' mine dat I'm no sae grit as idder men. I'm just as da Lord made me, and shürely He kent best whidder ta mak' me da tae wy or da tidder, an' sae it's da Lord der makin' a füle o' an' no me, if dey wid only tink apon it. Da first day I hed on this skinjup (shü wis split new den), Lowrie Wirk wis dichtin' hoes, an sae he begins ta fire hoe's eggs here an' dere, an' never lins till he stricks ane ipa da back o' my skinjup, an' da mark o' her—just luik ye—is dere yet. It might a bün my ee; tochtless, Godless wratch dat he wis.

Den dey ca' me da Mudjick fir a tü-name, but I never care what dey ca' me as lang as dey keep der haands aff. I'm shüre I wid meddle wi' naebody if dey wid bit lat me alane, fir I hae sic a feelin' hert I widna stramp ipa da wirm dat creeps i' da gaet I geng; an' dis brings me ta my story dat ye wir wantin' ta hear apon. Weel, as I was gaen ta say, whatever my body is, my hert, I'm shüre, is as grit an' as gude as idder folks, an'

if it wisna me dat wis sayin' it, mebbe a grain better in some wys, fir I may say fae I wis a knee height I'm aye hed a odious laekin' fir da lasses, bit, as da sayin' is, da mair haste da less speed ; I'm here jüst where I wis an' made little or naethin' o' it yet.

Weel, den, ta come ta my tale, da first ane I cüst my ee ta wis Sizzie Maikimsin, a dochter o' auld Eddie Maikimsin's 'at lived i' da Sheens. Dey wir odious weel aff, an' da folk sed 'at he hed bankit money, an' as fur baess, dey hed a winderfil luck ta craeters. I mind dey hed Fleckie an' Sholmie, an' Essie, a' milkin' kye ; an' den dey hed a rigged strik i' da hill, bit shü hed da spawwec an' wis ill wi' da gaa sickness an' warbecks in her back, dat shü truly hed. Den dey hed twa horses an' a mare, an' mind she hed a horse-foal wi' a white snie atween his een an' a peerie white spot abün his hint cliv ipa da left fit. Den I mind dey hed sax shaela yows, tree moorit gimmers an' a lock o' white anes. Dey hed twa hogs an' a ringle-eed ram, an' sae black end may he mak', an' you an' I be hael an' weel, fir ae day whin I wis standin' spaekin' ta Sizzy I never kent afore he fetched me a rattle i' da sma' o' da back an' sent me gröfflins apo my face i' da gutter, an' den Sizzie got inta a hert-shot o' lauchin' at me. Mind ye I wis very ill plaised at her, an' if it hedna büne fir ae why or annider I wid never darkened da door agen. Bit first ava, da wy we cam' acquaint wis ae day I cam' ower ta get a len o' her faeder's mussel draig, an' dey wir just poorin' der dinner. I mind it wis crappin' heads an' tatties. Sae I made fir gaen, but says she, " Rin na awa fae wir dinner, Mansie, bit pit in dy haand an' tak' a tattie ;" an' I did sae, an' I mind she lifted ane o' da grittest crappin' heads i' da trouch an laid it afore me. Dis touched my hert laek, an' made me luik at 'er whaur she wis sittin', an', as da auld sayin' is, "Gleg is da guest's ee," I noticed da wy she wis aetin' a brismick head afore hersel' ; she sooked da banes sae clean an' laid dem doon in a peerie roog

by demsels i' da corner o' da trouch. Says I ta mysel', dat 'ill mak' a carefil wife yet, get her wha laeks; sae as shüne as I cam' hame I got a sheet o' paper an' a maw's pen an' I sits doon an' wraetes a letter, an' dis wis it :—

Hoolinstoora April 21st Tiesday

My Dear Hinney Shugger an' Lickerish

(I pat doon lickerish because I kent she wid understaand best what dat wis, fir her graandmidder aye keepit a bit in a auld teapot wi' some rock o' da Camfier fir her braethin'.)

i Tak the Oppertunty off ritin' You this feu Lines too let you. no that I am in gude health hoppin' Too find You in the same

May dearest and Better
i rite yew This letter
Tu gion Your Affeckshins tu mine
You may Get a better yowl never get a kinder
So i prey yew thinck on it be time
Thee Rose is Red and the vilet is blue
The shugger is sweet and so are yew

May Dear I hope yew will xkuse may folley but I think you are the best lass in the town and I will com too yu nixt Setterday Nite i will com uppon the lum and Fling doon a piece of Divved and then you will know that it is mee I will kum efter yur Fok is gon tu Bed so you must sit up so no mor at present

But remanes
Your Well Wisser and True Lover
Magnes Mannikin.

O, she wis a douce doshie o' a lassie! Sizzie truly wis. She aye wüor a net mutch an' a white slug, wi' a blue claith coat, an' socks an' rivlins apon 'er feet, an' she wis bonnie, dat she truly wis. Lang, bonnie, black hair, sheenin' just laek a corbie's wing. Twa bonnie red cheeks, as pure as da under side o' a cockieloorie. An' sic a bussom! Haud yer tongue —just laek twa coles o' hay. An' den her een. O, dey wir winderfil! Just when she luiked sidewise dey glanced fir a' da world laek mareel, or I never ken what, an' sae it güed rushin' an' rushin' troo me an' oot at da points o' my taes lek shoores o' haet an' cauld watter. An' den my hert knocked an' knocked laek twa hammers apon a study makin' spades, an' every bit o' me trembled laek a leaf afore da wind. Den, when I didna

see her I cudna live ava. It wis lek a bonewrak troo my banes. I gud aff takin' my maet, an' fir ouks cudna sup mair den ae plate o' gruel i' da mornin'. My midder owsed up da remicle tü fir twa or tree mornins as she wis wint, bit whin she saw I never touched it she just made da pot up t' da trid ring an' nae farder. Weel, as I wis tellin' you, I wrote da letter, an' she wis no just sae well spelled as I wid 'a laeked, bit I can tell you I wis tinkin' a hantle mare apo' da sense o' her dan da spellin', an' besides I'm no just shüre if maw's pens is da best kind fir spellin' wi'. Sae, as I wis sayin', I faulded her up, an' sealed her wi' da red baa o' a egg, fir I hed nae wax bit shümakers', an' dat wis ower saft ; an' I sends da peerie boy dat wis ridin' wir paets ower wi' her, bit tauld him never to leet bit just ta mak' earrand an' spüir if ever dey saw wir spraekled duik dat wis gaen amissin', an' den try an' shiv it inta Sizzie's haand an' hark inta her lug wha it wis frae.

Weel, dis wis laek ipa da Tiesday, an' da last ouk o' April, an' we just hed tree days o' bereseed an' a day o' taties ta wirk, an' den we were won aff. Sae we wir ta hae wir affwinnin apo' Setterday, da very day I wis gaen furt my first vaige ta coort, an' sic a vaige as she wis. O, dear a me ! Bit I sall tell you aboot dis whin I come back again.

CHAPTER II.

Weel, as I wis tellin' you, wir affwinnin' wis ta be upo da Setterday, da sam' nicht as I wis ta geng furt my first vaige ta coort, an' sic a ouk as I hed afore Setterday cam'. I may say I niver kent mony a time what I wis düin', fir I wis aye tinkin' what I wis ta say an' foo I wis ta dü whin da time cam'. Wir folk wir just fairly mad apo me, an' nae winder, fir ae dey I sew a tattie-rig wi' bere-seed, an' sic a job as dey hed whin da scrüffin-time cam' afore dey got da bere a' pooed oot an' da rig made tattie-laek agen.

Anidder day we wir gaen fetch-fettles, an' Girzie Langlegs wis neist me. We hed da half o' her ta da voar, an' she haed fir her voar-fee tree shillins, twa pair o' rivlins, an' her haands, an' büst hae her tae four times a-day ower an' abune a' dis. I'm shure, Lord kens what servants ir comin' ta wi' der tae, tae, fir evermore; an' no dey demsels, bit auld an' young maun noo hae it, laek shute-watter, mornin', e'enin', an' midtime-a-day, just ruinin' der stamicks wi' it. Lay a skin i' da bark an' see what a snipperick it gets within, an' foo ye hae ta pu' an' rex it dis wy an' dat wy afore ye can get it ta come in fir da tee o' a pair o' breeks or onythin' else, an' sae it is wi' barkin' da stamick. It gets croppin in till a lempet-shell o' shute-watter, an' da mearest foonder oot o' da edge o' a mellins balley is a' dat a body can' tak'; an' den as dey get auld, look at dem. Just as yellow as a claek's fit an' as aekin up as a sookéd said.

Bit, as I wis sayin', we wir gaen fetch-fettles, an Girzie wis neist me. An sae I flings doon my tüm cashie ta tak' on her fu' een. Girzie wis a winderfil lent o' a woman. She could staand at da briest o' wir hoose an' skyle wir lum withoot ever sturtin' her. Weel, I wis just tinkin' dat minit what I wad say ta Sizzie, an' what she wad say ta me. I wis sayin' ower da wirds ta mysel' laek, ye ken, an' niver mindin' ta slip da fettle aff o' my ain head. Sae just as Girzie taks on da cashie she gies her a most tirmendeous triv—fir she wis awfil tirren dat day—an' afore I knew whaur I wis, I wis fleein' i' da air laek a maw, clean aff o' my feet; an' it wis a mercy o' Providence dat da breath güedna oot o' my body, fir da fettle, ye see, wis aboot my craig, an' deed da mark o' her shew a' dat ouk an' a guid pairt o' da neist ane. Sae efter dat dey aye ca'ed her "Girzie Gallows," an' dis aye made her just red mad.

O, she wis a ill-vicket craetir, wis Girzie, as ever I kent! I mind ae time, a while efter dis, whin I wis gaein' ta Sizzie. It wis apon a Setterday, an' a peerie while efter I wis geen furt, she raised up oot o' her bed an' set every tub an' sey 'at she

could fin', as weel as da muckle kettle an' muckle pot, an' da peerie kettle, an' a' just in a string frae da door t' da fire. Sae whin I cam' in it wis pit-mirk, an' I fins sontin' afore my feet just as I opens da door; bit tinkin' it wis just a lüme left dere by somebody unawaares, I tries ta jimp ower it, tinkin' a' da rest o' da flüir wis clear, bit as I gies da jimp I lands wi' baith my feet within da muckle kettle half fu' o' grice maet, an' den as I tries ta jimp oot o' da kettle my leg gengs within da bools an' I fa's a' my langlent (?) ower da tubs an' seys wi' sic a rattle as set wir dog up in a yowl. Wi' dis up sprang my faeder oot o' his bed, bit just as he comes oot da ben door he lands baith his feet within a sey an' ower he gengs wi' a rumble among da pots an' kettles, dinging up a lump apon his broo an' anidder apo da shin o' his leg. "O, murder," cries my faeder, "I'm killed!" an' wi' dat up jimps my midder tü an' comes rinnin' but, an' ower she faes ipa da tap o' 'im; an' sae if dere wisna a nicht i' da hoose den I sall haud my tongue.

O, dat Girzie wis an ill-vicket craetir, dat she truly wis; an' a' dis wis spite because I widna coort her. Bit, Lord bless you, what could I dü wi' da laek o' her? I wis nae mair buik aside her dan a sillick in a saxherrin'.

Bit dis is aff o' my story, as I wis gaen ta tell you, an' dat wis da neist thing dat happened within wir affwinnin' ouk. Weel, ae night we wir harrowin' till dimset, an' it wis i' da face o' da Flogga laand, an' just winderfil steep it wis. My faeder hed da muckle harrow gaen foremost an' I hed da peerie harrow comin' efter, sae he wis comin' up as I wis gaein' doon. Weel, Sizzie niver wis oot o' my mind a minit, an' I wis tinkin' an' tinkin' foo I wid fling da bit o' divet doon da lum; foo she wid lift da sneck o' da door an' let me in; foo we wid sit ipa da restin' share tagedder; foo I wid pit my airms roond aboot her, an' sit dat wy; foo I wid trist her i' my bossum; for I wid gie her a kiss wi' every trist,—an' den I could staand it nae

langer, bit I just gae a jimp frae da eart wi' baith my feet an' a spang doon da hill wi' da harrow ahint me, an' as my faeder wis comin' up I nailed my harrow within his ane, whin snap atwa güed his siddernips an' back ower he güed curley-head a-craw doon da face o' da rig. I fell tü a piece aneath him, an' dang tree new teeth oot o' my harrow ; an' as I fell wi' da harrow apo da tap o' me, ane o' da teeth strak me abün da henchie head, an' deed a sair straik it wis, bit I pat on a baff o' Shickenwirt an' sae it bettered in two or three days' time.

Weel, Setterday cam' at last, an' we delled ower da last pate aboot sax o'clock—dat wis a piece o' tatties,—an' I set a' day, bit tinkin' aboot Sizzie, mony a time I firyat ta pit in da sets, an' sae whin da sprootins cam' up pieces o' furs wir hipped here an' dere a' ower da rig, an' sae wir folk caed it da coortin' rig a year efter dat. Weel, whin a' wis düne, we cam' in ta get wir affwinnin, an' we hed brose ta wir supper. Nuxa happened ta come alang dat day, an' sae my midder set him ta dry da burstin'. He wis a winderful haand fir dryin' burstin', an' never needed a turnin'-tree, but just üsed his haand, an' it wis dat wy scuddered wi' dryin' burstin' dat da haet kettle niver hurted him ava. Nuxa wisna sic a füle as Tammie Robbie or Sandy o' Braemar ; Tammie Robbie wis a Lord's füle, bit Sandy wis a deevil ! Weel, we hed plenty o' guid bere burstin' an' da half o' a reisted coo's head, an' twa skenk houghs, an' Guid kens dey wir weel hained, fir we haed naethin' troo da voar, I may say, bit just mael an' watter. My midder boiled wir banes dat mony times dat we cudna boil dem ony mair. I mind ae day she wis sairly pitten aboot what ta mak' fir a dinner, an' sae she bade me geng up ta Eppie o' Mergiebanes an' ax her fir da lane o' her banes. "Yea, dat sall doo, my bairn, doo sall get dem," says Eppie. An' sae we got da lane o' dem, bit if dey got no a boilin', den I sall haud my tongue. Sae ae day efter dis, I meets Eppie, an' she says ta me, says she, "Can do tell me, Mansie, foo lang dy midder boiled wir banes whin she got da

lane o' dem da last ouk?" "Weel, says I, "mebbe a hour, Eppie," says I, "A hour!" says she; na, mair nearer five, I'm tinkin', says she, fir whin dey cam' hame dey wir just as tüm as a whissel, an' as dry as da killsimmer. Bit let her come an' ax me fir da lane o' my banes agen dis side o' Yule Day, if she daurs," says she, "an' doo can tell her dat frae me," says she. An' sae, I can tell you, Eppie wis nedder blyde nor bonnie. Weel, as I wis gaein ta say, we boils da coo's head an' da skenkhoughs, an' sic a sap o' pile as cam aff o' dat pot! We hed twa timmer plates an' da broon lame plate a' as fu' as dey could haud o' brose, an' ivery ane wi' a hole i' da hert fir da pile, an' ivery hole fu' up t' da tap; an' sae we suppèd, an' we better suppèd, till my faeder just hed enouch ta dü ta get ben da door, an' I gued ta bed an' lay till efter twal, an' den I raise up an' pat on my Sunday claes,—bit I canna tell you ony mair aboot it dis time.

CHAPTER III.

I'SE warren ye'll be wearyin' ta hear da rest o' my story, an' foo I cam' on. Weel, weel, I'm just comin' till it as fast as I can; an' sae, as I wis tellin' you, I raise up an' pat on my claes. I hed a new strippèd sark, spleet new aff o' da sheers, dat she truly wis. My midder shaped an' sewed ivery steek within her. Sae I pat her on first, dat I did; an' den I pat on my new white dook troosers, Nickel o' Braewick shaped dem, an' I sewed dem mysel': Nickel wis a winderful haand at shapin' troosers a' his days. Neist I pits on my new cloth jacket an' my new slippie, wi' socks an' shün apo my feet, an' my new Scots bonnet wi' da red tap apo my head, and furt I slips. But first I maun tell you what I hed i' da pouch o' my jacket fir Sizzie. Weel, dis wis a ounce o' lozengers, a half o' ounce o' clow an' cinnamon buds, ha'pennie's wirt o' lickerish, tree muckle roond sweeties, an' a string o' laamer beads fir

pitten roond aboot her neck. An' sae, as I wis sayin', I slips furt; but sic a nicht as he wis—poorin' an' rainin' oot o' a tick mist; an' dis pits i' my mind anidder night dat sam' winter.

Aye, dat wis a night among mony. I mind it wis apon a Setterday, da sam' wy. He wis a night o' storm an' sleet, an' as black as the kettle boddam. Ye cudna 'a seen da hand afore you, an' sic a herrican o' wind, ye cudna keep your feet a minit; bit geng I büst fir a' dat, an' sae I taks my gait, bit sic a gluff as I got afore I left wir hoose. I wis just gaen by da slap at da side o' da kiln, an' sae as I happens ta luik inta da yard I tinks I sees a white thing among da kail, an' wi' dat sontin' gies a snore up ower da riggin' o' da hoose. Weel, if ye'll believe me, my hert nearly jimped oot o' da bit, an' I taks t' my heels, bit I wisna tree lents o' mysel' fir da feet gengs fae me an' doon ower da bruo o' da gait I faes an' dirties a' da saet o' my troosers; bit it wis a mercy it wisna waur, an' sae I gets up agen an' tries ta keep da straik o' da rod as weel as I could, bit I niver wis sae oorie a' my days,. I tried ta whistle "Cock a Bendy hed a wife," just ta keep evil oot o' my mind; bit da mair I whistled an' da waur I wis, an' da mair I tried ta keep evil stories oot o' my mind da mair dey cam' in, an' dis ane among da rest.

Dis wis aboot a man at da Norden. He wis a boat's-bigger till his trade, an' ae nicht he wis gaein' hame frae his wark wi' his fit eitch apon his shouder, an' a short gait lay troo da middle o' da kirk-yard, an' sae as he wisna a oorie kind o' body he tinks he'll geng dis gaet just fir shortness, ye ken. Weel, it sae happened dat an auld wife—an' a deevil's craetir dey sed she wis—hed bün buried dat sam' day, an' he made da kist himsel' an' wis at da fooneral, an' sae kent a' aboot it. Weel, as he gengs troo dis gaet, Lord preserve wis if he sees na da grave—an' it wisna very far frae da side o' da rod—if he sees na dis very grave fairly tüm, an' da eart, wi' hench banes an' bare white skulls stickin' here an' dere troo it, a' in a heap apo

ae side, an' da empty coffin he made wi' his ain twa haands, staandin' apon 'er end an' linnin' agence da wa' just a peerie bit frae whaur he wis staandin'. O, dear, it maks me quaak ta tink o' it yet. Weel, he tinks dis is winderfil, an' kens na whidder he's draemin' or waukin'; bit ta mak' shüre he flings da eitch aff his shoulder inta da tüm grave an' sae he gengs on, bit he wisna da lent o' da slap o' da kirk yard fir da eart wis quackin' aboot 'im wi' unearthly laek sichts, an' sic soonds as mortal man niver heard in dis world afore. He sed dere wis a peesterin' an' a neesterin', a pleepin' an' a cheepin', a shirpin' an' a sheerin', a stunkin' an' a creestin', a yalkin' an' a yowlin', a claagin' an' a yaagin', a brülin' an' a reenin', a screichin' an' a yellin', just most awful; an' ivery noo an' den wid come in close afore his very nose some evil thing wi' a face at first da size o' a copper stür, an' as he tried ta geng on his face wid grow gritter an' gritter an' da mooth widder an' wider, an' da een redder an' redder wid glower an' glower till ivery ee wis laek a hairst mün as bright as the hert hole o' da lowin' fire, an' den in a minit it wid vanish in a blue lowe just ta begin agen. Den he wid hear a rumblin' i' da eart aneath his feet, an' a' roond aboot him it luiked as if it wis cracked an' fu' o' wide rents lowin' wi' bruntstane doon, doon as far as he could see; bit he aye keeped his senses an' wrasseled on as weel as he could dat wy fir da manse, an' sae at da lang an' weary lent he wan dere, bit just as he gae a knock at the door he fell doon cauld asoond. Da servant she heard the knock an' pat apon her an' ran t' da door, an' dere wis da man lyin' i' da trashald da sam' as he wis dead, sae ye may ken she got a gluff; bit she waukened da minister an' he cam' doon as fast as he could, an' dey got him in an' got some draps of speerits within him, an' sae he cam' roond agen an' tauld dem what wis happened.

Dis sam' minister kent a hantle aboot things o' dis kind. Ae time he wis sent fir ta keep a wife frae da deevil. Dis wife selled ale. Den a days ivery body made maut an' brewed ale

as dey laekéd, an' nedder offichers nor Excisemen ta trouble dem, an' mebbe less Faroe gin an' whisky drucken dan noo-a-days ; bit dat's none o' my business, an' sae I sall say na mair aboot it.

Weel, as I wis sayin', dis wife selled ale, an' ae time a man cam' in wantin' a bottle o' ale, an' she said she hed nane,—fir she wanted ta keep it fir some idder body. He traepèd and traepèd dat she hed some, an' den she said, Deil fetch her if she hed ony mair. "A bargain be it," says da Deil, wi' a snush, as he cam' clamperin' in da door wi' his muckle cloven feet, an' his twa short crooked horns stickin' oot troo da swee'd hair apon his head, an' his lang tail wabblin' an' wirlin dis wy an' dat wy laek a conger-eel in a cavil. Sae somebody ran fir da minister, an' he cam' as fast as he could wi' da Bible anunder his oxter, bit be da time he wan t' da hoose da Deil hed nearly gotten a grip o' da wife.

De locum melioribus, cried da minister, as he ran in atween dem.

Par nobile fratrüm, said the Deevil, as he winked an' held oot his haand t' da minister.

Bete noir, said da minister, as he pat his haands in his pouches.

An' sae dey argued an' bargued awa' dis wy, bit it wis nae üse, he widna geng awa', he said a bargain wis a bargain a' da world ower ; an' sae whin the minister saw he could mak' naethin' mair o' him, he just flang the open Bible in his face, whin aff he güed wi' a rumble, *bit he tüik da braid-side oot o' da hoose wi' him !*

Anidder time dis minister saw a lass gaen t' da banks ta mak' awa' wi' hersel' an' da Deevil shivin' an' shivin' her afore him a' da wy, bit da lass saw naethin'. Sae da minister rins as fast as he can' an' gets in atween dem an' da banks an' den he roars out, "*Quid nunc Origo mali, varium et mutabile semper fœmina. Die Gratia Siste Viator.*" An dat meenit da Deevil

slipped his grip o' da lass, an' catchin' da end o' his tail, laek a oater, rowed himsel' ower da banks laek a simmet clew.

Bit dis is no my story, though it's just winderfil da wy dat ae story leads till anidder. Weel, as I wis gaen ta tell you, da man revived an' he telled da minister what hed happened ; an' sae da minister raise an' pat on apon him, an' tuik a Bible under his oxter an' a razor in his pouch, an' he said t' da man, noo follow ye me, an' sae dey güed straught t' da kirk-yard, bit nedder sees nor hears onything. Sae whin dey comes t' da grave da minister says ta da man, Noo, Tammas, says he, tak' ye oot your eitch, an' sae he jimps doon an' taks up da eitch, and dey gengs roond aboot da kirk-yard an' comes back agen da idder wy, an' whin dey lüiks da coffin wis awa' frae whaur it wis staandin', da grave wis closed up, an' da eart a' as clear an smüth as if it niver hed a bün touched.

Weel, dis story an' mair o' da sam' kind gud troo my mind in a hantle less time den I'm taen ta tell it, an' sae ye may ken what a state I wis in. Sometimes I gud on, sometimes I ran, an' ivery grey stane an' cairn afore me I tocht wis da auld witch in her windin' sheet, an' ivery stripe an' fur I jimpéd ower I tocht wis her tüm grave wi' da banes an' da skulls lyin' i' da boddon, an' der empty ee-holes glowerin' up at me i' da dark. Foo I did strip ower da stanks an' stripes just laek a wind-craw, an' aye sayin' da Chief End o' Man an' da Lord's Prayer a' da time t' mysel' as fast as I could. I tocht dere wis a hunder imps o' Sathin at my heels wi' der very claws scruffling at da backs o' my legs. O, Lord ! keep us frae a' dat's unearthly ! I'm aften tocht apon it sin syne, whaur da auld witch could 'a bün da nicht she wis oot o' her coffin. Ye wid 'a tocht dat whin she hed gotten a spleet new coffin ta lie intil, an' her head sae weel taen aboot, she might 'a bun blyde ta lyan still, an' mebbe efter a' it wisna da auld craetir's wyte dat she raise up agen, fir ye see da Deil wid in coorse hae a rant da nicht dat she dee'd, an' sae it bein' a sort o' foy fir her hame-

comin', she büst be dere. Auld Nickey, as da saying is, is aye kind till his ain, an' it wadna bün richt o' her no ta a' come efter he hed pitten himsel' ta sa muckle trouble. Bit dis is awa' frae my story agen.

Weel, as I wis sayin', ta mak a lang tale short, I got ta da hoose sometime ; bit hoo I cam' on dere I'll tell you neist I see you.

CHAPTER IV.

Weel, as I wis tellin' you, at da lang an' da weary last, I wan t' da hoose, or, ta tell a truer tale ta da fit o' da stack, fir I wis faered somebody micht be gaen goaken aboot late as it wis ; sae I staands close inta da stack an' luns, bit can hear naethin'. Den I gengs roond ta da back o' da yard an' luiks in ower da daek at da hooses, bit a' wis dark an' still except a peerie grain o' licht i' Eddie Maikimson's skylicht.

I'm read in story books aboot men bein' cassen awa' at da sea an' niver kennin' whaur dey wir, an' den i' da dark nicht seein' a licht blinkin' far awa' at da edge o' da lift tellin' dem dat land wis in reach ; an' sae wis my feelins whin I saw dat sky-licht tellin' me dat Sizzie wis *my ain*, an' waitin' fir me at her ain faeder's fireside. Aye, man, I felt a strent within my body I cood 'a fechin' wi' a jian as grit as Goleeah-a-gath an' sent him within spündrift in twa' claps o' a lamb's-tail.

Weel, I climbs up ower da yard-daek, an' just as I'm gaen ta jimp doon again aff o' da tap o' da daek da piece I wis staandin' apon gengs afore da hill wi' a rumble, da fire fleein' oot o' da stanes laek a blaze o' lichtnin', an' me 'i da hert o' it, O ! it wis a mercy ever I raise agen, though da nail o' my muckle tae an' da shin o' my left leg paid for it ; but I got up as fast as I could, fir I kent Auld Eddie wid sprang furt laek a burnt grice whinever he heard a rumble ; an' sae he did, bit be dis time I wis snug in among da kail, though I saw him atween me

an' da sky at da yard slap gazin' aboot him laek a howlin' haegrie. Eh, mercy! bit I wis tremblin' laek a laef, fir he hed a deevil's temper whin he wis raised, an' if he could 'a gotten me he widna cared ta laid me cauld within da spot; bit da mist wis dat tick he couldna see very far, an' sae efter glowerin' aboot him fir a while he güed in agen. Weel, I lay still awhile fir I tocht a' wis quiet, an' den I craep oot an' trivelled aboot ta fin a piece o' divet ta fling doon da lum, bit nane could I fin. At last I fins a hard blue clod dat hed fa'en aff o' somebody's cashie. Sae tinks I, dis 'ill just dü as weel, fir it'll only fa' i' da ase an' canna dü ony faut. Weel, wi' dis clod i' my haand I creeps up ower da ragglin' an' den alang da riggin' till I got ta da lum an' I luiks doon, bit wi' da reek comin' up I couldna see onything bit just da red gleed o' da braands whaur da fire wis, sae I noo slips doon da clod,—bit, Lord save us fir evermore! fir sic a yell an' fir sic a hallabaloo as I hears athin da hoose; an' aff da riggin' I jimps, bit instead of jimpin' da wy fir da yard I jimpéd da idder wy an' richt ipa da ruif o' da byre, an' doon I gengs troo divets an' langbaands richt ipa Sholmie's back whaur she wis lyin'. Up she spangs wi' a skùol brül, an' I faas back ower. Weel, I winna say whaur I fell, bit I got up agen an' got me in ahint da byre door an' stüd dere a peerie while just ta draw my breath an' see what wis gaen ta happen neist; bit I maun tell you first what happened inside da hoose, as I fan oot efter, an' dis wis da wy o' it.

Sizzie hed sitten up waitin' fir me, bit sed ta her folk dat she wis hurryin' wi' a sock because she wis gaen ta Lerick dat ouk; sae dey a' gued ta bed save Auld Eddie, an' he wis sitting neebin' ower his fingers whin dey heard da rumble o' da yard-deck. Weel, he ran furt, as I'm sed already, an' whin he cam' in agen he set doon awhile an' smocked his pipe, an' den he güed i' da peat-crüe an' brought in some lang peats ta rest da fire wi', an' he wis just rakin' in ower da fire wi' ane o' da peats in his haand whin da clod cam' doon an' strack him apo da

very croon o' his bare baald head. As Sizzie tell'd me efter, she said he just ran roond aboot apa da hert stane cryin', "murder! deevil d—m!" an' den he made a ram-race fir da door, oot ower da brig-stanes an' roond aboot da yard, an' den he cam' in an' took da collie ta lüik i' da byre. A' dis time I wis ahint da door, bit whin I saw him comin' wi' da lowin collie in his haand I tocht it wis time ta dü sontin', and sae I gets haud o' da limb o' a piltock waand dat wis stickin' i' da rüif, an' just as he turns ta geng in troo da byre I fetches da collie a racket wi' da end o' da waand an' sends her, üllie an' a', oot o' his haand, an' den I spoots oot da door an' aff I skips ower da toon-mails an' niver luiks ahint me till I'm half-way hame, an' sae dat wis da upshot o' my first coortin' vaige.

Neist day I wis awfu' doon i' da mooth an' niver kent sometimes, I may say, what I wis düin. I just sat snoorin' i' da fire an' niver cared ta rise up or dü onything ava. Den my midder wid say ta me,

"Is doo fay, Mansie."

"No I, mam," says I, "bit I'm no weel."

"Doo's no weel!" says she, "what is da maiter wi' dee, Mansie? Sittin' dis wy as if doo wis benummed."

"Weel," says I, "mam, I niver ken what's da maiter wi' me, bit I truly wis' I wis dead, an' if it wisna fir ae why or anidder I wid just geng an' jimp ower da banks dis meenit."

"O, doo Godless bein'," says my midder, "kens doo what doo's sayin'? Doo may shüne be left ta dü dat indeed. Is doo no frichtened ta lit such undecipleened speech come oot o' dy mooth?"

Weel, I gies nae answer ta dis bit just siffers da best wy I can fir oot troo da followin' ouk, whin I meets Sizzie hersel', ae nicht whin I wis gaen t' da pilticks. Weel, whin I saw her comin' troo da gait my hert began ta faicht, an' a lump cam' i' my craig laek a muckle tattie; an' whin I grippit her haand I wis nearly greetin'.

"Sizzie," says I, "it wisna my faut."

"What wisna dy faut, Mansie?" says she.

"Flingin' doon da clod," says I.

"Bit what i' da Lord's name tempted dee ta fling doon a hard clod laek yon?" says she. "Daa is gotten him a bonnie laek head, I can tell dee—a muckle cut richt apon his croon," says she, "an' a' tied up wi' tobacco an' cloots," says she.

"Bit I couldna fin onything else," says I.

"Fin!" says she; "wis dere no a kail runt, or a air o' girs, or onything better or a clod? Bit niver doo say ony mair aboot it. It's a mercy my faeder is no dead, an' a' is weel dat ends weel," says she.

"I'm bün a hantle nearer dead den dy faeder," says I.

"What wy?" says she.

"I'm bün tinkin' ta mak' awa wi' mysel'," says I.

"What for?" says she.

"Because I tocht doo wid niver spaek ta me ony mair," says I, an' wi' dat da tears cam' doon ower my face, an' I graet laek a bairn.

"O, haud dy tongue, Mansie," says she, nearly greetin' hersel'. "Come agen, no dis Setterday, bit da neist ane, an' I'll leave da door aff da sneck, sae just come in whin doo comes, bit come later sae dat a' wir folk may be sleepin'," says she.

"O, Sizzie!" I cried, as I flang my büddie an' waands, an' tüik her within my bussom.

CHAPTER V.

Weel, as I wis tellin' you, I met Sizzie as I wis gaen ta da pilticks, an' she bade me come agen da second Setterday efter dat; bit, O! what a lang ouk dat wis ta me, I tocht ivery day a mont an' ivery hour a day, an' as my midder said she windered my life bede in, I tüik dat little maet. I dunna believe it took

mair den a lespon o' groats ta mak my gruel da hael ten days I wis dis wy.

Ye widna believe it, bit a' da misanters dat happened me da first vaige made no a bit o' odds ta me. I tocht na mair o' dat den an ase-puckle frae da fire. Fir truly ta won till her I could a geen up troo a runnick, doon troo a lum, or in troo a wumble bore. Yea, yea, naethin' faered me, bit ghosts, foregengs, witches, an' hillfolk gliskin' aboot me in a dark nicht; an' even a' dat couldna keep me awa', it just made me rin da faster till her an' tink da mair o' her whin I wan dere. Aye, indeed, da po'er o' da hert doesna depend ipa da size o' da body. Samson türe a lion within da merest bruck ae time whin he wis ipa da tap o' ane o' his coortin' tirls; bit I dunna believe fir a' dat dat his hert could hadden a grain mair love den mine, although fir strent-pairt, nae doot he could 'a pitten me atween his knees an' suppéd a plate o' haet broth ipa da tap o' me.

Spaekin' o' Samson pits da Bible i' my mind, an' da Bible pits elders, an' elders pits Sizzie's faeder. I tink I never telled you afore dis dat he wis a elder o' da kirk, bit ye can pit dat an' what he said whin da clod strack him i' da head tagedder an' tink apon it. Hed it a bün me, an' if I hed litten sic undeciplined speech come oot o' *my* mooth, he wid a bün da first ta hauled me afore da Saeshun, an' den it wid bün, "You Magnes Manikin, having been guilty of the sin of profane swearing," an' sae on.

Aye, aye, elders, elders! bonnie laek elders some o' dem ir. Sic minister, sic man, he bade his ain kirk-folk (dat's Mr Nairowsowl I'm spaekin' o')—he bade his ain kirk-folk lock da door ipa da Plymouthests an' no gie dem a' nicht's lodgin'; bit whin da door o' heaven is opened de'll mebbe win in afore him. It'll no be den, "Auld kirkers, come ye dis wy;" nor, "Frees, geng ye up yonder,"—bit *what wis ony o' you wirt t' da world whin ye wir in it?*. Are ye sheep or goats? Wheat

or chaff? Gold or dross? Da auld kirk, believe ye me, winna be fund a' gold, nor Plymouthests, an' even Catholics a' dross. Dunna tell me aboot dis point o' doctrine an' dat point o' doctrine, an' dat dis ane is richt an' dat ane's wrang. Ye're richt if your hert is filled wi' love t' da Lord an' your fellow-men, an' your whole life da ootcome an' evidence o' dis love. An' ye're wrang if ye are an embodiment an' combination o' meanness, greed, deceit, dishonesty, hypocrasy, bigotry, an' intolerance; yea, even though ivery fauld o' your lackie wis a leaf o' da Confession, an' ivery hair apo your head da treed o' a long-winded theological argument.

Bit, mercy me, whaur am I noo? "Da nearer da kirk da farder frae Grace," or raither da farder frae Sizzie,—fir it wis aboot her, dear lass, dat we wir spaekin' whin her faeder's swearing pat me aff o' da subject.

Weel, as I wis gaein' ta say, da langest road haes a end, an' sae Setterday cam' at last, an' as beautiful a nicht as iver cam oot o' da lift. It wis a raem calm, wi' a hush an' a caa aboot da shore, an' no a peel o' clood ipa dy sky, an' da muckle starns winkèd an' blinkèd, an' glanced just laek Sizzie's een whin she lauchs. Sae, efter twal, I slipped awa sooth troo da gaet. A' wis quiet, an' no a smud o' reek comin' oot o' ony hoose, an' sae I kent iverybody wis i' der bed. I wisna da laestest feared, bit as blyde as a lintie whytie, an' as light aboot da feet as a clockin' craw, sae I wisna lang i' gaen; an' when I comes t' da door I fins her a peerie bit open, sae I slips in withoot touchin' her, fir I wis feared fir her neesterin'. Noo, I comes slowly in ower da flüir, da collie is oot an' da fire rested, an' it's just as mirk as I can see Sizzie a kind o' side-wys sitten i' da muckle airm-chair afore da fire. Sae I sets me ipa da airm o' da chair an' lays my haand apon her saft shooder. O, dear! what a feeling dat wis, ivery bit o' me trembled wi' pleasure. My very hert knocked, an' I sichèd till I tocht I sud 'a lost da end an' couldna spaek a wird.

"Siz—Sizzie," I said efter a peerie while, "foo is doo?" an' pat my airm aboot her neck.

"Brawly, Mansie," says she, "an' foo is doo?"

"O, fi—fine, noo," says I, "bit"—an' den I niver minded what I wis gaen ta say.

"O, Sizzie!" I sed efter a peerie start.

"Weel, Mansie," says she.

"O, my dear!" says I, an' I tüik her i' my bossum, an' just as I wis gettin' da saftest, langest, sweetest kiss dat ever I got in a' da oors an' days o' my life, we hears da soond o' clogs comin' clamperin' ower da brigstanes.

"O, my Lord, dere's Lowrie Legaboot!" says Sizzie, under her breath, an' she jumpèd oot o' da chair. "Hoid! hoid! hoid! Mansie," an' she shived me afore her.

"Whaur, whaur?" I said, rinnin' da wy fir da paet crüe.

"Here, here! Mansie," an' afore I kent whaur I wis she hed me whombled anunder a muckle paet-cashie dat wis lyin' ipa da fluir.

Weel, tinks I, whin I cam' ta mysel', here's a change fir you! Aye, whaur wis I a meenit sin syne, an' whaur am I noo? Bit my tochts truly couldna fin' wirds ta say what I tocht, bit if I hed hedden da laer an' fine wirds o' some graand learned man far awa' I wid a' said what I tocht, dis wy:—

O, how mutable and evanescent are all things upon this sublunary sphere! A few moments since and I was by the side of my charmer, my peerless Dulcinea del Toboso. Her soft sighs and loving whispers thrilled my corporeal frame like a well-tuned lyre touched by fairy fingers. Yea, I dwelt in Elysium. Cupid, fluttering on his pinions, pressed me with ambrosial dainties, and like a thirsty *hymenopterous* insect I sipped nectarean juices in the garden of delights. But where am I now? Put under a bushel! eclipsed! extinguished! A hated rival approaching my Venus, my Naiad, my Dryad! but I will defend her with my life. Yes, a good fairy shall touch

me with her wand. She will transform the dwarf into a brave knight of the age of chivalry. I will then challenge him to single combat. I will approach him with my vizor down. I will strike my hand upon the jewelled hilt of my sword, and will say—draw! an' wi' dis I strack my haand ipa da inside o' da cashie, an' den I heard him sayin'—

"What's dat?"

"O, it's a clockin' hen we have under a cashie ipa da flüir yonder," says Sizzie.

"A hen clockin' dis time o' year?" says he.

"Aye, it's a *new* kind dat's clockin' ony time a year," she says.

"An' niver lays ony," says he.

"An' niver lays ony," says she.

"An' what keep ye her fir den?" says he.

"O, just fir fancy," says she.

Aye, dear lass, "fancy" richt enouch, says I ta mysell'; an' noo I lüns ta hear what she wid say till him neist, tinkin' she wid shürely tell him just ta geng awa' an' niver shaw his face within da door again. Sae I sits a peerie while langer, an' den I hears dem whispering' an' whisperin' under der breaths, an' den I hears da chair crackin' an neisterin', an den I hears—yes, I hears—O, da villian! O, my Sizzie! I hears dem—dem—kissin'! an' wi' dat I spang ta my feet. Da cashie gengs fleein' i da air. I maks a rush fir Lowrie. We closes. Sizzie gies a screich. Her faeder jumps oot o' his bed an' lichts da collie. He tries ta sinder wis, bit we niver minds him, an' sae, laek a sensible man, an' mindin' ipa da fülishness o' comin' in fir da reddin' stroke, he just laeves wis ta fecht it out wirsels.

Losh, man! bit dat wis a tüllie. We rowed aboot da fluir, sometimes he wis apo da tap o' me, an' sometimes I wis apo da tap o' him, an' sae we rowed an' we tüllied ower da flüir an' oot at da door an' niver lint till we wir apo da green.

A' dis time I niver slippèd my grip o' 'im, da strent o' da

very muckle deevil seemed to be in me. I wis a' elted i' da gutters, as we rowed aff o' da brig-stanes, bit I niver minds dat ; I mauls awa' at him wi' my neives, an' wirries him wi' my teeth till he can staand nae mair o' it, bit fairly caves in, an' lies stark apo da green.

I'm tinkin' I wis a boonie sicht mesel', bit he wis a picter ! His right ee closed up, his upper lip spleet, an' da bluid fleemin' frae his nose. I didna luik muckle at 'im, fir I began ta fin' a dwaamish kind o' a wy aboot my ain head, an' I made fir hame as fast as I wis able.

An' sae dis wis da upshot o' my second vaige oot coortin'.

NOTES TO SHETLAND FIRESIDE TALES.

Note A, page 1. Trosswickness.

Trosswickness is a small promontory on the east side of the mainland of Shetland, about 5 miles north of Sumburgh Head, and 4 miles east of Fitful Head. With the exception of a narrow margin of green pasture skirting the irregular outline of the precipitous cliffs which guard the eastern extremity of the Ness, the whole region is wild and barren in the extreme, and no hermit could desire a more befitting emblem of his state than that presented by the sterile and stony wilderness which everywhere meets the eye.

On the highest elevation of this headland, and within a hundred yards of the edge of the cliff, are the ruins of an ancient "Brough" or "Peight's" house (as such structures are named by the natives). That so many similar structures in Shetland are found along the coast-line, and occupying positions where the widest range of view can be obtained, points distinctly to the inference that the primitive builders of those erections must have intended them for watch towers as well as places of habitation—the necessity for their former use arising from the frequent and unwelcome visits of the Vikings or sea-robbers from the coast of Scandinavia, or other hostile approaches. The name Trosswickness applies to both sides of the bight or creek of Trosswick; but it is on the southern headland, lying between Trosswick and Voe, that the scene of the story is laid.

Note B, page 2. Shetland Manners and Customs.

It is characteristic of a primitive people that they cling fondly to old manners and customs, and thus a century may pass over them and leave little or no change in their ideas or mode of life. This fact has enabled the author to place the time of his story about the middle of last century, and yet draw many of its incidents from the experiences of his own boyhood. Old people then living could carry their recollection back to the middle of the previous century; and thus by his own observation, together with the testimony of others, he has had the means of comparing the manners and customs of the Shetland peasantry for a period of more than 120 years.

Note C, page 4. Peculiarities of the Shetland Dialect.

That the old Norse or Icelandic language of the present day was once the language spoken by the natives of Shetland there can be no doubt, for the evidence of this is still to be found in the Norse derivation of names of places throughout the islands, every creek and headland, every village and croft, bearing names only slightly modified by the dominant influence of the later Scottish element. As additional evidence of this, we have the direct testimony of George Buchanan, the historian; the Rev. Mr Brand, who wrote in 1700; and also Sir Robert Sibbald, in 1711.

With the arrival of the early Scotch settlers, their language was gradually introduced, and hence the origin of what we now find, viz.—a mixed dialect with a Norse idiom. How very early this change took place, seems to be indicated by the remarkable circumstance that some words found only in the works

of the rhyming chroniclers of the 14th and 15th centuries, and long since ceased to be spoken in other parts of Great Britain, are still used by the natives of Shetland. But, early as the Scottish dialect began to incorporate itself with the Norse language, it is remarkable how distinctly the Norse idiom has been retained by the entire exclusion of the lisping sound of *th* at the beginning of words.

The English sound of this double consonant is almost peculiar to the English language.

A foreigner either cannot or will not pronounce it, and the Shetlander of the present day follows the example of his ancestors by substituting *d* for the hated *th*. Thus, for *this*, *that*, *then*, *they*, *them*, *thou*, he says *dis*, *dat*, *den*, *dey*, *dem*, *du*, and so of all the words beginning with *th*. This and other peculiarities lead to considerable confusion both in sense and grammar: thus the English noun *den* is to the Shetlander an adverb; and the word *clash*, a verb, is in the Shetland dialect a noun, meaning gossip or scandal, and so of numerous other examples which might be given. But notwithstanding those defects, the Shetland dialect possesses, in common with many other dialects, what is often lost when they become the vehicle of written communication and of the higher kinds of oral address, viz., richness of inflection, friendly familiarity, and naturalness; and it is on this account that the author has made use of the dialect where he found it an advantage to do so, there being numerous instances where the full meaning of Shetland words and phrases finds no proper equivalent in English.

Note D, page 7. Fairies.

The belief in fairies has been among the superstitions common to perhaps all European nations, and can be traced back to the early ages to the Indo-European race. The name "fairy" does not admit of any distinct definition except in a local sense, because the general character and disposition of those imaginary beings have been ever found to vary, and to take their colouring from the social habits of the people amongst whom they were supposed to dwell, as well as from the geographical features of the country which those people inhabited. Thus, in a flat pastoral country such as England, the fairy was gentle and loving, useful in domestic affairs, and ever ready to perform generous and praiseworthy actions; while, in a mountainous country, such as Scandinavia or the Highlands of Scotland, the fairy was cruel, mischevious, and so destitute of any sort of virtue as to fully justify the opinion of its demoniacal origin.

In Shetland, as might be expected, fairies were of the Scandinavian type. Their origin was traced to the Fall, when the angels who joined in Satan's rebellion were cast out, and those who fell in the sea became mermaids and mermen; and those on the land became fairies or "hillfolk," which is evidently a corruption of the Danish "Ellefolk."

They were composed of males and females of very diminutive stature, something like human dwarfs. Their clothing was always green in colour, fitting close to the limbs, as became beings capable of performing such sprightly and agile feats as they indulged in. They walked barefoot, and both sexes wore a sugar-loaf hat of extraordinary altitude. They were capable of rendering themselves invisible to the human eye, and of seeing as mortals could not. This power was obtained by anointing the eyes of the baby fairy at birth with an eye-salve prepared by fairy art. Their dwelling-places were fairy "knowes," or *tumuli*, in which were plain homely places of abode, and nothing of that gorgeous splendour and enchanting grandeur which eastern fiction has described. The northern fairy, however, knew how to enjoy life, and revelled in noisy mirth, and on the "light fantastic toe" tripped to the merry music of the fiddle as only a fairy could. These carousals generally took place after some successful raid upon the property of mortals above ground, for, like the clan M'Gregor,

the fraternity had a strong *penchant* for black cattle. Though fond of music, they had no genius for the art; as on the occasion of a wedding or at Yule rejoicings, they were under the necessity of charming away some expert fiddler from the upper regions, who was, however, always sent safely back, but suffered from a certain jumble or confusion of intellect for some days after the event. Though deficient in the art of instrumental music, their vocal performances were of a high order, and on calm summer evenings the soft strains which sometimes fell upon mortal ears in the neighbourhood of fairy dwellings were such as could only come from Fairyland.

The author remembers, when a boy, an old woman telling, as a "winter fireside tale," her experience of fairies or hillfolk, and that in her youth it was customary to sit near "hillfolk's knowes" in the summer evenings, and listen to the sweet music which proceeded from them.

Those fairies followed no honest calling, but were a kind of respectable banditti, helping themselves to human or animal subject as occasion required, but doing it in such a way as to give as little offence as possible. If they wanted a cow, they did not flourish their dirks in the air and yell like a lot of wild, hungry M'Gregors; they went invisibly to work, and aimed an elf-arrow as near "Crummie's" heart as possible. As soon as the shaft was felt, the wounded animal showed symptoms of distress by rolling her eyes wildly and "brülin," as if in a death-struggle. If the shot was a good one, the effigy, which was prepared beforehand, was now left as the dead animal in the room of the real one, which was quietly transported to their subterranean dwelling to garnish the fleshpots of Fairyland. If the elf-arrow was blunt, as very often happened, it did not penetrate the hide of the animal, but left an indentation or vacuum below the skin, which in time became equally fatal; but here the village cow doctress interposed with her Archangel tar, gunpowder, steel, and incantations, and by means of such weapons, offensive and defensive, fairly beat the enemy off the field. The author has witnessed several such cases, and carefully examined the supposed wound, as well as watched the efficacy of the supposed means of cure.

When it suited their purposes to carry off a human subject, their procedure differed to the extent of sometimes leaving a *living* substitute, but the imposture was generally detected by the quality of the article; for example, for a fair plump healthy child the substitute was a dwarfish ill-thriven creature, which was a burden to itself and a trouble to everybody. In order to recover the proper child, it was necessary to sweep the substitute out of the cottage door along with ashes or other refuse. This operation was generally performed by the child's mother, who thereafter sat by the fireside and watched the door until her own child, in all its health and beauty, walked in, when she at once rushed to the door, and, shutting it, described a circle round the child, and then ejaculated, "God save my bairn!" On one occasion the fairies were so incensed at being outwitted in this way, that they formed a ring outside the consecrated circle, and blew their breaths upon those inside it, until their skins were covered with huge blisters.

Other characteristics and peculiarities of fairies will be found in the different fairy tales given in the work, and which are rendered as nearly as possible in the exact words of the native storyteller.

Note E, page 9. Shetland Surnames.

The curious practice existed in Shetland amongst the peasant class till about the beginning of the present century, of the Christian name of the father of a family being used as the surname of his children. Thus, a son of Jaarm (Jeremiah) Edemson would be Eddie (Adam) Jaarmson; or, a son of Laurence Robertson might be Hans Laurenceson, and in the same way the daughter of

Erasmus Ollason would be known as Osla Rasmeson. This of course rendered tracing the genealogy of families beyond a generation or two a matter of much difficulty.

Note F, page 17. Calvinism.

There can be no doubt that Calvinism, as a system of religious doctrine, and as it was taught by the early reformers, has stood in closer relationship to human progress and general enlightment than any other creed since the world began; but while this is true in a general sense, it does not hold true with the same force in particular cases. Shetland has shown but little progress under the influence of its teaching, because its effect upon the native mind was rather to confirm than uproot the remnant of that Pagan belief in Fatalism which was common to almost all the nations of antiquity, and, like all other superstitions, lingered longer in those remote islands than in most other places. Calvinism, as embodied in the standards of the Church and taught by old divines, was not the kind of axe to lay to the root of this Upas tree, but in its ultimate conclusions rather affirmed than denied the Pagan belief.

"God foreordained whatsoever comes to pass" was the fundamental principle of Calvinistic doctrine—a doctrine true in itself when viewed by the eye of intelligence, and in connection with God's sovereign will as the Great First Cause working through the operation of law, and recognising human agency as a necessary factor, but pernicious and derogatory to the Divine character when viewed through the mists of ignorance and superstition, which obliterated any proper line of demarcation, and made Divine providence littleelse than a household deity of Greek or Roman mythology, and, as such, superintending and determining the most trivial affairs of human life.

The rude, unlettered islander, with his mind still biased by the lingering influence of this Pagan belief of Fatalism, was further taught the doctrines of election and predestination. How was he against this to balance the human element of freewill and responsibility? If every event with all its varied circumstances and most remote influences upon human life and destiny, were known and determined beforehand, human action could not alter what was so decreed; such action could only be the *effect* but never the *cause* of anything.

So truly does this represent the case, that even in the present day the Shetland peasant could not utter a dozen sentences on any subject connected with human effort or enterprise, without showing the influence of his Calvinistic teaching. No doubt this has fostered, as it still does, devout feeling and submission under difficulties and trials, but it has also proved a formidable obstacle in the path of individual enterprise and general progress.

Note G, page 36. Norway Witches and Wizards.

History proves that the influence of any system of religious belief lingers amongst a people long after that belief has ceased to be recognised as a national faith, and thus it is that traces of Scandinavian mythology exist even in our own time, faint and distorted no doubt, but still sufficiently marked to identify them with the more elaborate originals which they represent.

The belief that witches and wizards came from the coast of Norway disguised as seals, was entertained by many of the Shetland peasantry even so late as the beginning of the present century; and it is worthy of note that the supposed object of those unwelcome relations of the *Phocidæ* family was plunder, evidently showing that the seal-wizard was just the Viking or sea-robber of former ages. The terrors which those marauders once inspired still existed in the native mind by tradition and impression, though the real danger had passed away. Time and superstition had changed the form, and the supernatural had gradually assumed the form of the natural. It was not, however, supposed that those familiar spirits, in their sea-dress, actually carried off the

goods and chattels of the natives, but they accomplished the same purpose by a much easier process. They charmed away whatever they set their minds on —such as fish, cattle, sheep, farm-produce, &c., just as the house-wife versed in black art charmed away her neighbour's butter-"profit." It is highly probable that the ancient belief in mermaids and mermen, which can be traced to the Arab seamen and Greeks, tended to connect the seal with those supposed diabolical adventures of Norwegian wizards. Again, there was the difficulty of shooting the seal while swimming, owing to his singular capacity of diving on the fire, *i.e.*, diving as the powder flashed in the pan of a flintlock, and before the shot could reach him. Besides these, many incidents might occur in the experience of the seal-hunter, which were perplexing to his untutored mind, and which he could not refer to any natural or mechanical principle known to him. These thoughts are suggested by an incident which occurred in the author's own experience of seal-shooting, which was as follows :—

In the Shetland Islands, the home and breeding-place of the seal is in some wave-worn cave, guarded from the approach of man by inaccessible cliffs. He also has the sagacity, when fishing near frequented places, to keep beyond gun reach of the shore; but this rule was departed from in the case of an aged patriarch of unusual size for a common seal (*Phoca Vitulina*), which evidently wished to enjoy a little quiet during the declining years of his life, and for this purpose selected for his home a deep pool formed by two natural jetties of rock in the neighbourhood of the author's birthplace. This pool was overlooked on the north side by a high turreted rock, forming by its rugged pinnacles an excellent place of concealment for the sportsman. During the day this venerable denizen of the deep fished quietly along the shore north or south of his pool, but always returned thither in the evening, where he amused himself by frequently diving and rising to the surface at short intervals. This continued for several years, till at last the author became possessed of the much-prized gift of a gun, and after proving himself a good sportsman with smaller game, he resolved on the more daring exploit of bagging the old gentleman of the pool. Putting in therefore a double charge of swan-post and some heavy slugs (similar to those used for shooting Irish landlords), he climbed the rock on the north side, and concealing himself behind two sharp natural turrets, waited for a chance. In a few minutes the old wizard broke the surface, rising to his flippers, shaking the water from his grizzly beard, and snorting loudly as if his extreme corpulency had put him out of breath even by the little exercise he was indulging in.

"Now, mind yourself, old fellow," was whispered, as the gun was levelled at the occipital region of his cranium. The trigger pulled, but missed fire. The piece was now drawn back, priming examined, flint touched up, frizzel scraped, and all made ready for his next rise. Gun again levelled, trigger pulled, but not a spark would the flint strike. For two long hours was the process repeated, at intervals of about ten minutes, but with the same result—the gun would not go off. Amazed and perplexed, the author now determined to examine the lock carefully, as he believed some spring had gone wrong. He therefore shook the powder clean out of the pan, and cleared it from the touch-hole as far in as the chamber. With the piece now lying across his knees, and pointing away from the seal, he pulled the trigger just to see the action of the frizzel-spring, when lo! the gun went off with a loud report, reverberating along the rocky steep which stretched away in the distance.

Now, here was a case of an excellent fowling-piece, which was never known to miss fire, when it is pointed towards the seal no amount of human ingenuity and perseverance can make it go off; but no sooner is it pointed in the opposite direction than off it goes, though under conditions which rendered such an occurrence almost an impossibility. Was it not therefore natural and excusable to conclude that the cause lay in the seal and not in the gun? and ever since

that occurrence took place, the author has felt it a necessity that we should first require to know all that our forefathers experienced before we condemn their beliefs as the offspring of ignorance and stupidity.

Note H, page 43. Superstition of the Evil Eye.

The belief that any housewife versed in the black arts of Necromancy can, by charms and incantations, increase the supply of butter in her own churn in proportion as she has the power to diminish that of her neighbours, has long prevailed in Shetland, as well as in some other parts of Scotland.

This superstition is one form of the ancient and general belief in an *Evil Eye*, which belief has not been confined to the nations of Northern Europe, but existed even amongst the enlightened Greeks and Romans. The Greeks called it *Ophthalmos Baskanos*, and the Romans used the verb *Fascinare* to express the same idea.

How this and similar beliefs, now looked upon as childish and absurd, and all but vanished before the light of science and general intelligence, should once have been so firmly believed in by men of all ranks and conditions of life, and by nations socially and geographically widely separated, is one of those interesting and perplexing questions to which modern inquiry is directed. How, for example, did the belief arise that the human eye possessed the power of charming or bewitching in an evil sense? Is it not possible that an answer to this may be found in the fact, that the mesmeric power of the eye was known to the ancients, not as a physiological phenomenon connected with psychology, but as a mysterious, unnatural, and demoniacal power exercised on the willing subjects of the Prince of Darkness?

If we can suppose a case where the ancient mesmerist accidentally, and unknown to himself, made this power felt by gazing in the countenance of another person, nothing was more natural than to connect the innocent and unconscious operator with any misfortunes which might afterwards befall the individual who had thus felt the power of his mysterious gaze; and, once a foundation laid, human invention and exaggeration could do the rest. Whether this may be the true explanation or not, certain it is that the belief of an evil eye has had a common origin, and was connected with the exercise of some remarkable power or faculty not common to men.

Against this view may be urged what has been advanced by some writers on the subject of mesmerism, viz., that the operator has no power except what is permitted by the will of his subject; no doubt, in many cases, the power of the operator may be equally balanced by the existing will of the subject; but as no resistance can be offered by an unconscious subject, it surely follows that a highly susceptible individual, ignorant of the subject of mesmerism, may be influenced by one possessing enormous mesmeric power, even although that power may be only accidentally put forth.

Note I, page 46. Cup Divination.

It was a maxim with the nations of antiquity, that if there are gods, they care for men, and if they care for men they must be desirous to impart a knowledge of future events, because, by this means, man would know how to obtain the good and avoid the evil; but the great difficulty lay in the question, how to find suitable vechicles of communication by which the gods might be propitiated to vouchsafe to men this needed knowledge.

The ancient Chaldeans sought in the starry heavens to know the fate of nations and of individuals; and the middle ages, for the same purpose, looked in Auguries and Auspices.

There was *Axinomancy*, the art of discovering the perpetration of a crime, by poising an axe on the top of a pole, and judging of guilt or innocence by the

direction in which it fell. *Belomancy*, shooting with arrows. *Bibliomancy*, opening the Bible and observing the first passage which occurred. *Botanomancy*, divination by plants and flowers. *Capnomancy*, divination by smoke. *Cheiromany*, reading the lineaments of the hand. *Cosinomancy*, divination by using a sieve and pair of shears. *Crystallomancy*, divination by crystals or precious stones. Cup divination, cup reading. *Geomancy*, divination by pebbles. *Hydromancy*, divination by water, or by a mirror. *Lithomancy*, divination by stones. *Oneiromancy*, divinatiou by dreams. *Pyromancy*, divination by fire. *Rabdomancy*, divination by the divining rod, &c. A strange list of delusions indeed, we may now say; and equally strange it is that so many of them have come down to our own day, it being within the author's memory when Bibliomancy, Cheiromancy, Batanomancy, Cosinomancy, Cup divination, Oneiromancy, and Pyromancy were all practised in the Shetland Islands, at least to such an extent as renders it easy to identify each particular superstition with its more elaborate prototype.

Cup divination by the ancients was a more aristocratic performance than its more modern disciples could attain to. The former placed precious stones, with inscriptions on them, upon gold leaf, and dropped them into water contained in a glass cup, and read the signs on its surface; while the latter used a stoneware cup and a few tea grounds, forming pictures by the fortuitous arrangement of stalks and broken leaf. The author has often had these pointed out and explained to him by an expert; and by a little help of the imagination, wonderful pictures they make of things both animate and inanimate. In foretelling events by the aid of those pictures, the order of time is reckoned from the brim of the cup downwards, the brim being the present, the bottom the distant future, and the scale being days, months, or years, according as the nature of the case requires. The author is bound to say that he has known many wonderful predictions by cup diviners followed by as wonderful fulfilments.

Note K, page 52. Shetland Ballads and Music.

Shetland now possesses no ancient songs or ballads known to have been written by native authors, and it is extremely doubtful if any such have ever existed; nor is this to be wondered at, when we consider that the bulk of the native population were for centuries the objects of severe oppression, and that education or higher culture scarcely existed.

The petty tyrants who ruled them as with a rod of iron, took care also to keep them in ignorance as the most likely means to reconcile them to their lot; besides, in the doubtful possession of ignoble peace, they knew nothing of the "pomp and circumstance of war," and little of the thrilling theme of romantic love—themes to which the national airs, songs, and ballads of all nations owe their origin.

There was evidently only one path in which the ancient Shetlanders cared to seek artistic distinction, and that was as a musician and composer of reel music; and in this he has certainly excelled, for Shetland reel music, so far as it goes, is equal to anything of the kind to be found in Scotland, or perhaps in any other country.

The Shetlander of the olden time knew little enjoyment but such as the domestic circle and the social gathering afforded. His toilsome occupation and frequent absence from home during nine months of the year, made the return of winter especially grateful to him. Then his fare was best, his leisure most; his courtships, marriages, and merry-makings made him forget for a time both tyrant and toil, and revel in the enjoyment of that "gaytime" which every Martinmas brought with it.

His fiddle—the only instrument of music known to him—was the centre of attraction in every social gathering, and never failed to call forth that wild

athletic exercise and those powers of endurance which he could so well exhibit in the native dance or "foursome reel," when the home-brewed ale went round in flowing "cogs," or the smuggled keg of Dutch gin was broached to honour some "rant" or wedding.

Here, then, according to the universal law of supply and demand, reel music was supplied because it was wanted; to play the fiddle was an accomplishment eagerly sought after by all lads having a musical ear; and those of them who possessed a genius in this way were able, through the course of time, to add original compositions, and all such compositions exhibit the same characteristics, being light, stirring, and expressive of feelings of exuberant mirth and rollicking jollity.

Note L, page 70. Trade with Norway.

It is within the author's recollection when only two small sailing vessels were employed in the trade with Scotland. Then, and more especially in earlier times, the principal trade of the islands was carried on with the Norwegians and Dutch.

Shetland was entirely dependent on Norway for her supply of wood, and to a large extent for that of fishing boats, which were brought over just as they were finished in the builder's yard. They were put together chiefly by "treenails" or wooden pins; but as these were not considered by the Shetland fishermen to be sufficiently safe, the boards were farther fastened by iron rivets. Like everything else which came from Norway, these boats were looked upon with suspicion, and unlucky or "misforn" knots had to be searched for by some aged son of Neptune, expert in such matters, before the boat was allowed to float.

Note M, page 75. Pyromancy.

Pyromancy, or divination by fire, was common amongst the Greeks and Romans. In offering sacrifices to the gods, the manner in which the victim was consumed was held to prognosticate good or evil. If the sacrifice burned clear of smoke and did not crackle, the omen was favourable, but otherwise it was not.

In Shetland, pyromancy was closely allied to cup reading—half consumed brands taking the place of tea grounds. When a peat fire is nearly consumed, some of the brands often remain standing in an upright position in the light white ashes by which they are surrounded. And it was the fancied resemblance which those brands bore to persons, animals, ships, &c., which furnished the fire reader with the means of foretelling events. One solitary upright brand, resembling a man or woman, was always called a "guest," *i.e.*, a stranger or visitor from a distance. If it could be guessed who the person might be, and if welcome, the brand was lifted in the tongs and placed in the centre of the fire, and other brands heaped around it; but if the person was looked upon as an intruder, the brand was dipped in a tub of water, so that the individual represented might get a drenching of rain if he or she attempted the journey.

Note N, page 76. Bawby of Brigstanes.

The original of Bawby o' Brigstanes was a well-known village gossip bearing the same Christian name, in whose cottage the author spent many happy evenings when a boy.

Note O, page 92. Superstitions of Fishermen.

Shetland fishermen, in common with many of their brethren elsewhere, believe that in going to the fishing if they meet certain persons they will have

luck, and if they meet others, the very reverse will happen; hence all their acquaintance come to be divided into lucky and unlucky people.

So far as those persons are themselves concerned, they may be lucky or fortunate, though the baleful influence they exercise on the calling of others may be of the most marked description. The author has known fishermen on going to the fishing take a different road, in order to avoid meeting with certain individuals whom they saw approaching, or do what is alluded to in the verse—send a member of their own family out to meet them purposely, as a protection from the evil influence of a bad foot when on the way to the boat.

Note P, page 174. Sailors' Superstitions.

The allusion here is to a well-known sailor's yarn, which is told as follows :—

Jack and Bill were messmates. Jack made his money "spin" as fast as he got it, but Bill was saving and penurious, and hoarded his money, which he kept in a bag concealed in his hammock. Jack coming to know this conceived the horrible design to murder his shipmate, in order to get possession of the money; and to accomplish this without the deed being discovered, he one night approached Bill's hammock, where he was sleeping, and pierced him behind the ear with a sail needle, which, while it penetrated the brain, left almost no perceptable external wound. In the morning the man was found dead in his hammock, and the captain, believing he had died a natural death, ordered the body to be sewed up in a hammock, and committed to the deep, with the usual formalities of a burial at sea. The same night the watch on duty were startled by hearing a voice from the foretop give the usual warning-call, "Stand from under," which sailors always do before sending anything down on deck. The watch knowing that no one was aloft, were so terror-stricken that none of them had the courage to give the response, "Let go;" but as the voice still continued the call, and waxing louder and more stern each time, it broke the stillness of the night. At last, one more courageous that the rest answered, "Let go," and down fell with a heavy thud on the deck the murdered man's body, sewed in the hammock just as it was put overboard. The captain was then called, and all hands summoned on deck, when each of the crew was put through the ordeal of touching the body. When it came to the murderer's turn he stepped forward trembling, and with horror depicted in his countenance, and for a moment hesitated; but the stern voice of the captain quickened his movements, and he touched the corpse, when at once from behind the murdered man's ear spurted out a stream of blood. The murderer was at once seized, put in irons, and soon after paid the penalty of his crime, when the vessel arrived at her port of destination.

Note Q, page 202. Native Courage.

A young lad, who was one of the author's youthful companions, once performed a feat similar to that assigned to the Hermit of Trosswickness.

It was on a dark December day, when a fearful south-east storm raged along the coast, and strewed the shore with wreck. Hugh waves rolled with thunderous dash against the dark precipitous cliffs, and sent the rock-beaten spray like pillars of cloud to the sky.

In one of those *gios* or creeks, with which the coast-line is here indented, this lad with a number of others lay watching the landing of wreck, which was borne in by the waves, when observing a piece of plank which had got fixed between two rocks far down the beach, he determined to get possession of it. Divesting himself therefore of his outer garments, he stood ready until the receding wave enabled him to run down the beach to the spot where the frag-

ment of wreck was ; then, just as the next wave with foaming crest rose high over his head, he threw his arms around a pinnacle of rock, and clung to it, while over him rushed the roaring flood. Soon as the wave again rolled back, he sprang to his feet, wrenched the plank from its hold, and ran for his life, chased to the top of the beach by a wild mountain wave, foaming and hissing as if in rage at being deprived of its prey.

Note R, page 204. Wreckers.

If anything could tempt the law-abiding, peacefully-disposed Shetlander to deviate from the even tenor of his way, it would be a wreck cast upon his rugged and inhospitable shore. Then indeed the old instincts of his race appear, and the spirit of the wrecker is upon him. No fatigue or privation can discourage him, no danger can appal him, if a fragment of wreck can be secured, no matter how trifling its value. He feels a ruling passion, which he can neither resist nor explain, and it can only indeed be explained upon the principle, that the love of any pursuit peculiar to a race will live long after that pursuit has been abandoned, and that the influence of habit rests upon races as well as upon individuals.

A former generation of Shetlanders, in common with the inhabitants of every isolated place around the British coast in those times, considered that the spoils of the sea were their own, and hesitated not to approriate such whenever an opportunity offered. Time and enlightenment have changed all that, but at least in the case of Shetlanders the old feeling remains, just as the modern sportsman with a full pocket and a well stocked larder, pursues the game with the same ardour and unwearied perseverance as did his hungry ancestor whose dinner depended on the fortunes of the chase. In both cases alike all consideration of the value of the object to be gained is lost in the intense pleasure of pursuing it. If any one objects to this comparison, the author can only ask such an individual to suspend his judgment till he has witnessed the scene of a shipwreck in a storm on the Shetland coast, with salvers at work.

Compared with a shipwreck and a whale hunt in Shetland, both of which the author has witnessed, the princely pursuit of deerstalking is tame, and grouse shooting only a childish amusement.

Note S, page 215. Bridecake.

The use of bridecake can be traced back to the Romans, and amongst that ancient people consisted of a cake of wheat or barley, which was symbolical of that unity of heart and life which the married state was supposed to bring.

The practice of breaking the cake over the bride's head as she entered her new home, is evidently a usage of very remote antiquity, and was once universal in England and Scotland. In Shetland an oat cake is used, which being broken in fragments is put in a basket, and thrown over the bride's head, just as she returns after the marriage ceremony has been performed. Here then is an act of crowning or consecrating, just as ancient kings were consecrated by pouring holy oil on their heads, and there can be little doubt that the former claims as great antiquity as the latter. Bread is the staff of life, and was therefore a fitting symbol by which to consecrate or appoint the new-made wife to the duties of her office, and as guide and ruler in her own little domestic kingdom. Modern usages, and the growth of luxury, have converted bridecake into a highly ornamental piece of confectionery, and in this way shorn it of all its original, symbolic meaning; and thus it is, that for what a people sometimes gain in advanced civilization and refinement, much is lost in what is beautiful, simple, and natural.

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